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P. 68

Sunset

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2014 NATIONAL PARKS GUIDE

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March



"My garden takes the guesswork out of menu planning."

Photograph by THOMAS J. STORY

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ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE WEST'S CLASSIC NATIONAL PARKS

Go now! There's never been a better time to visit these six of the West's most beloved national parks. *Introduction by Nevada Barr*

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The view from the valley floor: Yosemite's two-tiered cascade, at its peak in spring.
Photograph by Matthew Kuhns/Tandem Stock





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#**Montana**Moment | North of the Beartooth All-American Road between Red Lodge and Cooke City

"The goats had just weathered the same storm as I, but with no tent. They looked calm, at ease and gracefully at home here in the heart of the Beartooth Mountains." SAM MAGRO



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BACKYARD WONDERS



WE LOVE PARKS
Sunset's orchives ore full of illustrotions ond photos of the West's 40 notionol porks—we've published 116 orticles obout Yosemite olone.

SUNSET HAS ALWAYS taken the West's wild areas personally. Our very first issue in 1898 featured a cover story on Yosemite, and over the years, we lobbied for the establishment of new parks (like Redwood) and the maintenance of the classics, and extolled readers to head to the hills and hike.

A quick poll reveals that everyone on staff has taken that advice, with Yosemite a clear favorite. Associate food editor Elaine Johnson and her family have been to Yosemite multiple times (her twin sons have been campers since they were 4 months old, a family tradition). Garden editor Kathy Brenzel fondly remembers spending a month in Yosemite with her siblings as a child and rafting the Merced River. But no one at *Sunset* is so well traveled—in the parks at least—as Peter Fish, an editor here for more than two decades. Of the 40 national parks in the West, Fish has visited 35.

Fish's love affair with the parks started, appropriately enough, with a book. "I was about 5 and had acquired *Cubby in Wonderland,* about a bear cub and his mother exploring Yellowstone," he says. "I remember reading it in my parents' Pontiac and then going out to look at geysers. I was hooked." He still loves the alien, wondrous landscape of Yellowstone best, he says, but the relatively unknown Great Basin in Nevada comes close. "It's high up, at 8- or 9,000 feet, and the night sky is so clear. You can feel the whole North American continent exhaling. Such serenity."

This month, in honor of Yosemite (first protected 150 years ago) and the coming centennial of the U.S. National Parks Service, we launch our first of several guides to our wildest places. Meanwhile, I'm headed to Peter Fish's office for some advice. I thought I'd done my share of hiking the West, but it turns out I'm 28 parks down!



PEGGY NORTHROP, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF @Peggy_Sunset | reoderletters@sunset.com

Vote for your favorite tiny house!

OUR EDITORS have been sifting through the entries to our Small Space, Big Dreams contest—and now it's your turn to help. From March 1 to 31, we invite you to pick your favorite creative small-space solution from 10 finalists in each category: whole house, one-room wonder, satellite space, on wheels or on water, and outdoors. Winners will get a chance to be featured in *Sunset* later this year, so be sure to vote for the ones you want to see up close! Visit *sunset.com/smallspace.*



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FROM LEFT: E. SPENCER TOY, THOMAS J. STORY (2, HAIR AND MAKEUP: PRESTON NESBIT/AUBRI BALK, INC.)

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BEST OF THE WEST

MARCH 2014

OUR 12 FAVORITE THINGS THIS MONTH



1. Cultivating veterans

Our returning soldiers need jobs, and our country needs more farmers. For these two crises, Michael O'Gormon, who for decades ran organic farms in California's Salinas Valley, came up with a single solution: Teach veterans to farm. His Farmer Veteran Coalition matches vets with farmer mentors all over the United States; distributes information on government aid; and gives money and advice to participants like former Navy radar specialist Kelly Carlisle, whose quarter-acre urban farm and CSA in East Oakland supports her nonprofit, Acta Non Verba. She works with kids ages 5 to 13, who plant, harvest, and sell the vegetables; 100 percent of the proceeds goes into their savings accounts. "I enlisted in the Navy to find a purpose," Carlisle says. "Three weeks into boot camp was 9/11, and I found my mission." Something similar happened when she left the Navy, came home, and saw hopelessness in East Oakland's youth. "I decided to be part of the solution. This is what I'd fought for." *farmvetco.org; anvfarm.org.*

Photograph by DAVID FENTON

2 BLOOM COUNTIES

Look out! This spring, arroya lupine, purple needle gross, ond Califarnio desert bluebells ore taking aver L.A. County with the help of londscape provocoteur Fritz Hoeg, the orts group Las Angeles Namadic Division, and the plant experts ot the Theodore Payne Faundotion. The proj-ect, Wildflowering L.A., involved sowing four blends af native wildflowers ot 50 sites last fall. The plots were chasen for their visibility and far the impoct the flawers wauld moke. Now you can reap the benefits: Visit *wildflawering.arg* far a map and info on whot's blooming. At the mare moni-cured end of the botonicol spectrum, the 69th onnual Santo Barbara International Orchid Show halds caurt midmonth: Along with taking in o weekend's worth af arrange-ments ond odvice, yau con tour seven leading local nurseries—this is the cymbidium copitol of the country, after all. *$12; sbarchid shaw.cam.*



3 Gas, Food, Lodge

The latest mini trend in hotels? Quirky meets woodsy. Three fine, fun examples:

Wildwood Snowmass

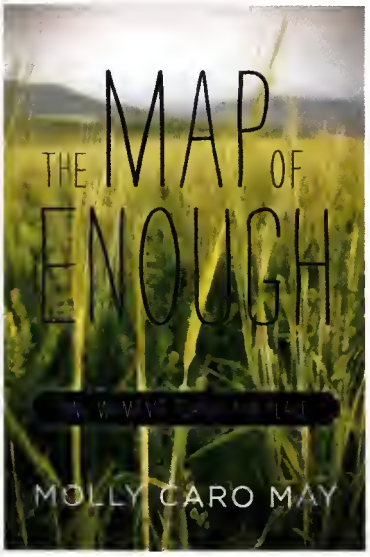
The formerly rundown Wildwood Lodge, in Colorado's Snowmass Village, has gone 1960s ski-lodge retro. The renovated 145 bedrooms are still small, with space-saving captain's beds, but you're meant to be down in the lobby—an alpine version of Pee-wee's Playhouse—involved in a rousing game of Trivial Pursuit or having a Fat Tire Ale in the bar. *From $199; wildwoodsnowmass.com.*

Basecamp Hotel

Closer to the *Moonrise Kingdom* model is the Basecamp Hotel in South Lake Tahoe. (One of the two suites even has a tent set up in the bedroom to house the bed itself.) More good-scout touches include camping lanterns on the desks, wool-blanketed bunk beds in some rooms, and communal dinners three nights a week. *From $129; www.basecamphotels.com.*

Ojai Rancho Inn

This 1950s mom-and-pop motor court was recently bought by a pair of mom-and-pop entrepreneurs. The couple kept the knotty pine paneling and rustic lodgepole beds, but they traded the mass-market cowboy kitsch for an Arts and Crafts vibe. This spring, they're adding a poolside wine bar called the Chief's Peak. *From $99; ojai ranchoinn.com.*



4 GOOD READ

Before restless, rootless Molly Caro May left New York City with her fiancé in 2009 for 107 acres of woods and grassland in Montana's majestic Gallatin Valley, she'd gloried in being a global nomad—a pattern set in childhood, when her executive dad moved the family to various foreign postings. Then she learned the joys of staying put. In her beautifully written memoir *The Map of Enough: One Woman's Search for Place,* out March 18, she explores the challenge and allure of creating a real home in an age of ever-more-virtual interactions—and reminds us why we love the West. Spoiler alert: Although the experiment was supposed to last only 12 months, she still calls Montana home. *$25; counterpointpress.com.*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TESSA TRAEGER/TRUNK ARCHIVE, EVA KOLENKO


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5 CANDLE WITH CARE

Lost yeor, Jomes Minala, co-owner with wife Chelseo of the design firm Groin on Woshington's Boin-bridge Islond, was playing oround on their shap lathe with beeswax candles from Oregon. He carved some into the shape af furniture legs, snapped o few phatas, and pasted them an Instagrom. In three doys, they gornered so mony little hearts that he mode a botch af condles to sell. Now, the honey-scented Totem condles ore Grain's most popular new product. Fram $22; graindesign.com.



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6 Transformers

Not surprisingly, fire hoses and climbing ropes are usually replaced long before they show signs of wearing out. Two Bay Area–based upcyclers thought it was a shame to consign these former lifesavers to a landfill. LauraLe Wunsch transforms hoses from firehouses all over California into handsome mats, firewood carriers, even furniture. (Before her company, **Oxgut**, moved into its Emeryville space, she used to wash the 50-foot hoses in her yard and hang them on a clothesline.) Ryan Dempsey of **Dog Patch SF** braids donated belay lines into dog leashes, available online and at his booth in the crafts market across from the Ferry Building. He donates 20 percent of his leashes to animal shelters. *Oxgut: Mats from $165; oxgut.com. Dog Patch SF: Leashes from $25; dogpatchsf.co.*

7 EASY RIDING

Borrowing a concept popular with cycling-mad Europeans, Scottsdale's year-old Bespoke Inn is geared (sorry) to the needs of serious riders and neophytes alike. In the heart of downtown's galleries, shops, and restaurants and just a few blocks from Scottsdale Stadium (spring training!), the four-room neo-adobe B&B offers its own repair shop and easy access to miles and miles of glorious Sonoran Desert bicycling. Bespoke rents road bikes and has comfy city bikes for guests to use gratis. And breakfast at the inn's top-rated Virtù restaurant is included—fuel up! *From $389; 2-night min.; bespokeinn.com.*



8 Powder rangers

Did winter just slip right by yau? We've got two lost-chance spring-break skiing options, both greot for fomilies. The first is Montona's **Big Sky Resort**, which in 2013 odded Maanlight Bosin ond Sponish Peaks to become the biggest ski resart in the country. The merger olso opened up o lot of terroin for beginners, mixed with enough block-diomond runs to keep everyone hoppy. The second aptian is one-fourth the size ond convenient for Colifornions: **June Mountain**, in the centrol Sierro, which in its lotest incarnation hos forsaken the edgy X Gomes demo ond returned to its Moyberry roots. Cose in point: Kids 12 ond under now ski and snowboord far free. *Big Sky Resart: One-day lift ticket $99; bigskyresart.cam. June Mauntain: Fram $72; junemountain.com.*

FROM TOP: JEFFERY CROSS (2), CHRIS HINKLE


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CRUNCH ON

9 Sitting pretty

A few years back, L.A. shae designer Charlatte Stane and her husband, artist/waadwarker Steve Nasker, faund an ald lawn chair at a prap shap an La Brea Avenue. Stane made a new macramé seat and back aut af bright plastic card, and befare lang it was the mast saught-after seat in the hause—and the inspiratian far the clean-lined, bent-plywaad Palapa Launge Chair *($800)*, the first praduct fram the cauple's new campany, Pacific Wanderland. They've since added stoals and a racker, all made lacally. Caming saan, a lawn versian af the Palapa that can stay autdaars 24/7. *pacificwanderlandinc.cam.*



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10 SMOKEY THE BEER

March is the perfect month for a season-spanning brew. A centuries-old German tradition being reinvented in the New World, smoked beers are made with wood-smoked malts that have an earthy tang reminiscent of wintry stews as well as summery barbecues. We like the porters best, such as **Epic's Smoked Porter** *(epic brewing.com),* out of Salt Lake City, and **Deschutes Brewery's Class of '88 Imperial Smoked Porter** *(deschutesbrewery.com),* from Oregon. **Uncommon Brewers** *(uncommonbrewers.com)* in Santa Cruz, California, does something a little different to make their **Bacon Brown Ale**: They steep a bacon-cured pork leg in the beer before fermentation. (Trust us—it's great.)

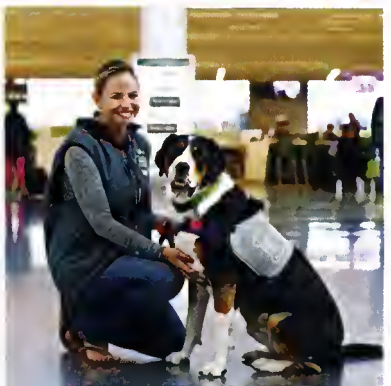


11 OM SWEET OM

When the gaad peaple at the Asian Art Museum heard that the Smithsanian was maunting Yaga: *The Art af Transfarmatian*, the idea af bringing the exhibitian ta San Francisca far its anly West Caast stap was—as curatar Qamar Adamjee says—a na-brainer. Dan't miss the 1938 film faatage af Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya (aften called the father af madern yaga) practicing with a very yaung B.K.S. Iyengar (naw ane af the warld's mast famaus teachers). *$17; thraugh May 25; asianart.arg.*

12 TRAVELERS' TAILS

San Francisco International Airport's yoga/meditation room apparently wasn't enough to tame stress for passengers in transit. So authorities called in the experts: dogs. All shapes, all sizes, all adorable. Now, thanks to the SPCA, the Wag Brigade calms jittery flyers, deploying seasoned therapy dogs—and their equally well-trained handler/owners—every day in all SFO terminals. (Look for the vests that read PET ME!) Our favorites so far: Donner, the mellow black Lab, and Kona, a gentle giant of a Greater Swiss Mountain Dog. *flysfo.com.*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DAVE LAURIDSEN, COURTESY OF THE MEHRANGARH MUSEUM TRUST; DAVID FENTON; JEFFERY CROSS (3)


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—LISA BLACKBURN OF THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, ART COLLECTIONS, AND BOTANICAL GARDENS

DIANE COOK & LEN JENSHEL



DISCOVER

1



2

1. Comel's Back Park, a local favorite. 2. Fram left: Teloya Wine's education consultant Kat Hause and wine-makers Eorl and Caroline Sullivan. 3. Telaya's robust reds, naw mode fram 100 percent Idaha fruit. 4. Shap at Bricalage for Baise's answer to the classic I ♥ NY T-shirt. 5. The Idoho State Capitol.



3



4



5

A PERFECT DAY IN

BOISE, ID

From indie boutiques to a foodie-friendly downtown, Idaho's outdoorsy capital has plenty of urban fun. *By Evelyn Spence*

A small-town vibe, big-time wines

"Some people might call our tasting room gritty, but we like to call it industrial chic," says Earl E. Sullivan, co-owner of **Telaya Wine Co.**, a winery bunkered in a vegetable warehouse turned sanctuary for urban winemakers. The shared space—which is also home to Coiled Wines, Cinder Winery, and the House of Wine, a viticulture classroom and laboratory—anchors Garden City, a separate municipality 3 miles from downtown Boise and ground zero for Idaho's jeans-and-fleece vino scene. Chances are you'll get to sip with Sullivan himself, a Kentucky native who was drawn here by Boise's natural beauty and stayed to raise his young family—and to give winemaking a shot. "Everyone thinks we make *potato* wine here," he says. "Which just leaves more great juice for Idahoans." And savvy visitors. *$5 tasting; 107 E. 44th St., Garden City; telayawine.com.* →

Photographs by DAVID FENTON

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GETTING HERE
Boise is less than 1½ hours by air from Portland, Salt Lake City, and Seattle and 2 hours from Denver.

The Basque bloc

Boise is home to one of the country's largest concentration of Basques, most of whom can trace their lineage to ancestors who immigrated to Idaho in the late 19th century to become sheepherders. Their modern cultural hub: **The Basque Block**, where the street is inlaid with the four-headed *lauburu* cross and where lampposts fly red-white-and-green *ikurrina* flags. Try the revered tongue dish *($7.50)*, served with garlic bread, at Bar Gernika, one of four Basque restaurants on the block, or *pintxos*—small bites—which are available by the toothpick for as little as 50 cents a bite at The Basque Market. *Grove St. between Capitol Blvd. and Sixth St.; thebasqueblock.com.*

Molto local food

Nearly every detail within **Àlavita**'s exposed-brick and flocked-velvet walls has a Boise tie: the handmade pasta; the drinking glasses, made from the bottom halves of empty wine bottles by a local glassblower; and the enormous metallic-silver lodgepole pine fixture above the bar, created by a Boise artist. Owner Cameron Lumsden ate "six or seven meals a day" while researching in Italy, then returned to Idaho to re-create porcini tagliatelle pasta *($15)* and surf-and-turf risotto *($21)* with Northwestern ingredients. Drinks and desserts hit the *au courant* sweet spot: Cocktails like the Rock + Rye *($9)*, a blend of rye whiskey, citrus, and vanilla, hint at the Prohibition era, while the vanilla *budino ($7)* is served in an antique glass jar and topped with salted caramel sauce and toffee chocolate pretzel bark. *807 W. Idaho St.; alavitaboise.com.*

Etsy-bitsy art

Maybe it's Idaho's farming and mining heritage, but DIY is a state of mind in the City of Trees. At **Indie Made**, a downtown boutique run by a 50-member artisans' collective, enameled belt buckles hang near organic cotton onesies, chunky handmade jewelry, and witty letterpress cards. And just three blocks away, tiny hipster haven **Bricolage** sells high-style souvenir T-shirts, offers regular sewing classes for "reluctant seamsters," and rotates monthly shows of local artists. *Indie Made: 108 N. Sixth St.; shopindiemade.com. Bricolage: 418 S. Sixth; bricoshoppe.com.*

Tapping into Treasure Valley

Microbreweries that held IPOs (Idaho Public Offerings); nanopubs; beer halls that opened so quickly, they lacked signage. It's easy to lose track of all the buzzworthy barrels in Boise these days. One newbie worth toasting: **Pre Funk Beer Bar**, which has a tap for almost every brewery in the Treasure Valley and a site that lets you order growlers—they'll even deliver to your car. Of course, there's no need to cut and run: Pull up a stool and try a pint of Seven Devils Imperial Stout *($7.25)* from Sockeye Brewing. *1100 W. Front St.; prefunkbar.com.*


6


7


8


9

6. Àlavita's bar scene swings beneath an installation from local artist Tadd Martin. **7.** The Basque Block, complete with *ikurrina* flags. **8.** Àlavita's handmade pappardelle. **9.** Pre Funk Beer Bar has about 20 beers (many from Idaho) on tap.

BY THE NUMBERS

355	234	140
PERCENT INCREASE IN IDAHO WINERIES SINCE 2002	DAYS OF SUNSHINE PER YEAR	MILES OF TRAILS IN THE BOISE FOOTHILLS



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THE REAL DENVER

ASK A LOCAL

You didn't travel a mile high only to come up short. Two tour guides show you the town.
As told to Kasey Cordell



ADAM LERNER
Director of Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver



ANNELISE LOEVLIE
CEO of ski compony Icelontic Skis

Where do you go to see classic Denver?

ANNELISE: The lobby of the **The Brown Palace Hotel**. It's plush and comfortable and there's a musician named Danny Showers who's been playing piano there since I was a kid. We'd come every Mother's Day to eat at Ellyngton's, which still has the best Champagne brunch in Denver, hands down. Danny is always playing on Mother's Day. **ADAM:** I love that it's unpretentious and yet still a fancy place. It's a special environment in that way. During the National Western Stock Show every January, they parade the prized steer through the lobby.

I would also recommend driving all 26 miles of **Colfax Avenue** to get a sense of what Denver was like when it was still a town where people stayed overnight on their way across the country. The neon signs are wonderful and give it the feel of old Vegas. You start to imagine someone in their fancy '40s car zipping through and getting excited about reaching the West.

Favorite low-key lunch spot?

ADAM: My go-to for authentic Mexican food is **El Taco de Mexico**. You'll always find Anglo hipsters there, fueling up



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Franklin St. at Eighth Ave.; denvergov.org.

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THE HUMBLE PIE STORE
300 Elati St.; humblepiestore.com.

"They bake several different pies daily—sweet pies, fruit pies, a couple af savary pies and quiches."



IRONWOOD
14 S. Broadway; ironwood collection.com.

"Yau dan't knaw whether things are made by an artist ar same 19th-century cartographer. It's all mixed tagether."



RED ROCK. RON KOEBERER/GETTY IMAGES/AURORA CREATIVE

before they cruise the art galleries on Santa Fe. The steak tacos remind me of what I eat when I'm in Guadalajara, where the tortilla is a way of getting the beef from the plate to your mouth. **ANNELISE:** I work right near there. Our building has 42 people in it, and every day someone is chowing on a burrito or tacos from El Taco. *$; 74 Santa Fe Dr.; eltacodemexicodenver.com.*

For a fancy dinner?

ANNELISE: I take out-of-towners to **Rioja**. The menu is seasonal and consistently interesting. I'm not a huge meat eater, but their pork belly appetizer is magnificent. They serve it on a bed of curried chickpeas. And as always, it's accompanied by the best selection of breads, butters, and salts. *$$$; 1431 Larimer St.; riojadenver.com.*

Where do you shop besides the malls?

ADAM: I like **Ironwood**, a perfectly curated curiosity cabinet of a store. You don't know whether things are made by an artist or some 19th-century cartographer. It's all mixed together. There might be a beautiful selection of cactus next to artist-designed sculptures. **ANNELISE:** You can find crystals and air plants and locally made jewelry. I picked up these cool earrings there that are long gold chains with baby rattlesnake vertebrae.

What's a good park?

ADAM: The only place in Denver I would actually drive with my dog to take a walk is **Cheesman Park**. It's simple, shaded, and French in design. And it's got the most wonderful oval-shaped field of grass.

ANNELISE: It's elevated and hilly, so you can get a good perspective of downtown.

How about a one-of-a-kind museum?

ADAM: There's nothing like the **Kirkland Museum** in the world. It's inspired by the art of Vance Kirkland, a midcentury Colorado painter whose style went from realist to surrealist to abstract expressionist to space age. It's a completely eccentric collection of decorative art, midcentury modern furniture, and design objects. And it's all curated by one guy, which is what I love: There's an authenticity and craziness to it that's electric. *Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art: $8; 1311 Pearl St.; kirklandmuseum.org.*

Tell us where the locals drink?

ANNELISE: The **Denver Beer Co.** is a very simple brewpub, with bench seats and a big patio. It's all about the beer, nothing more. I get the graham cracker porter—dark and smooth with a nutty, clean finish. They also have food trucks, which is such a good model. Brewpubs should do what they do best: make beer.

ADAM: There's a fantastic drink at **Williams & Graham** called the Smokey Mountain Cocktail, made with honey vodka, habanero juice, and mezcal. So it's smoky but also hot and sweet. I ask Jason Patz, my favorite bartender, to custom-make something. He went to art school, and it shows. He experiments with flavors in the same way an artist thinks about putting materials together in interesting combinations. *$$; 3160 Tejon St.; williamsandgraham.com.*

Other can't-miss Denver institutions?

ANNELISE: It's about 15 miles southwest of town, but since the place is owned by the city, I like to think of **Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre** as ours. I always encourage people to go. Just walk around and *feel* the space. It's got its own energy even when there isn't a performance. **ADAM:** We don't think about it as such, but this is one of the great works of architecture in the country, a stadium-size arena that opens up to this breathtaking mountain scene. I've seen the most beautiful sunsets there while listening to music.

ADAM: One of the best bookstore experiences anywhere, **Tattered Cover** is this great combination of the place you want to hang out in for an hour and a store where you can find anything you're looking for quickly. They feature lots of local authors, and there are always books on hand about the environment and such. When you're done, you can also go to nearby Twist and Shout, which is an awesome record store.

ANNELISE: A cool pie shop in the Baker district is **The Humble Pie Store**. It's one of the only businesses around there. Best crust I've ever had. They bake several different pies daily—sweet pies, fruit pies, a couple of savory pies and quiches. People love the pie shakes. Which is exactly what you think it is: ice cream, milk, and a slice of pie, all dropped into a blender.

DIGITAL EXTRA Where to stay, eat & play in Denver: sunset.com/denver.

Photographs by THOMAS J. STORY

WANDERLUST

SHOW & TELL

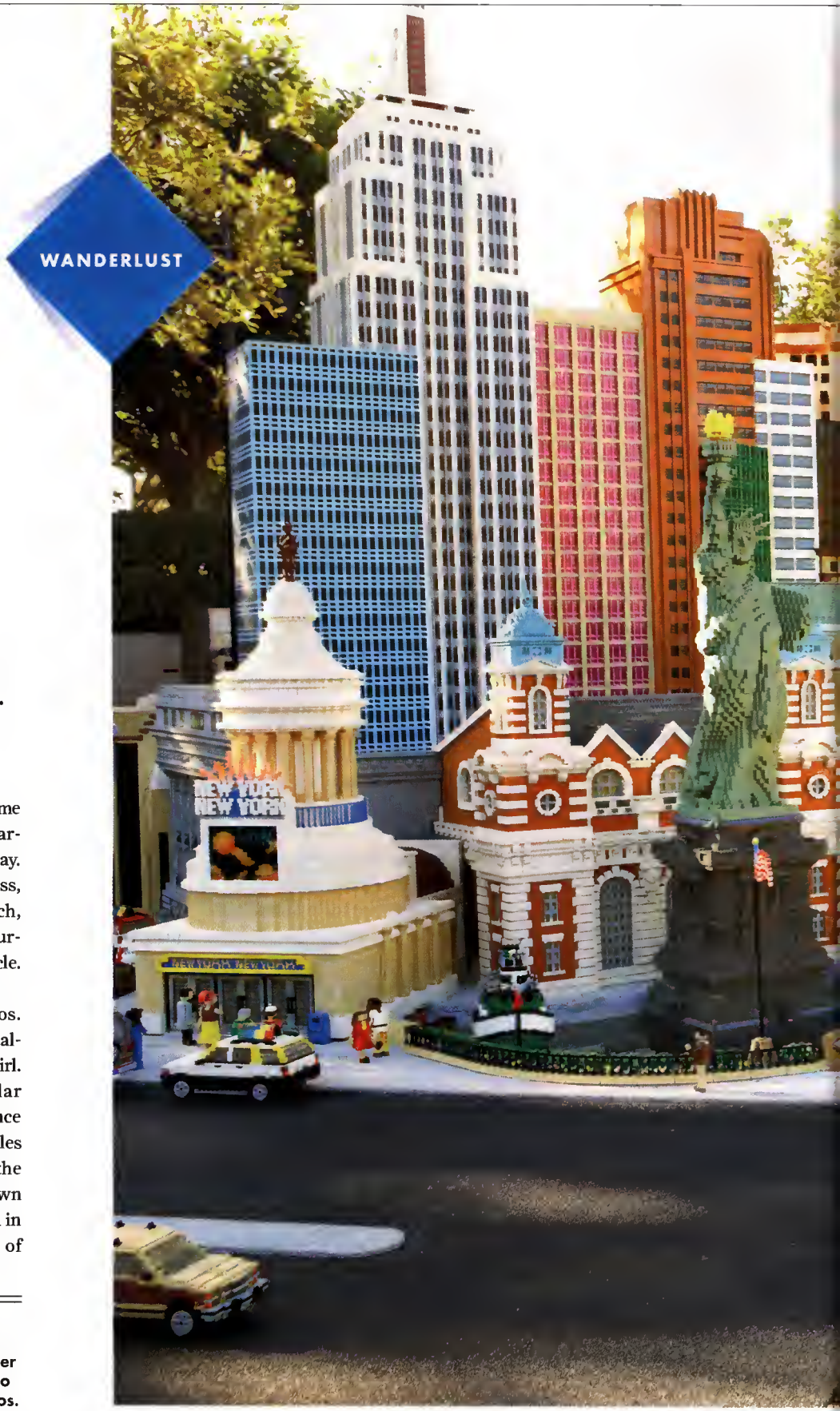
At California's Legoland, a blind dad and his 6-year-old daughter build memories, one brick at a time.

By Ryan Knighton

I LOST MY SIGHT nearly 20 years ago, yet some challenges never seem to get easier, particularly as a father. Consider how difficult it is to play. You wouldn't want me riding bikes with Tess, my 6-year-old daughter. We don't play catch, either. Draw pictures? Her artistic ability surpassed mine the moment she could pen a circle. And though I'm a writer, I can't read to her.

What we can do, however, is play Legos. In our house, Legos are a touchy-feely, equal-opportunity toy. Close your eyes. Give it a whirl.

Hundreds of billions of Lego's modular plastic bricks have been manufactured since 1947. A Danish invention, Legos are—by sales and ubiquity—the most successful toy in the world. They are also the premise of their own amusement park franchise, with a Legoland in Carlsbad, California, 40 minutes north of San Diego, and a four-hour flight from our home in Vancouver, British Columbia. Here Tess could explore a toy that is the mutual



"Let me show you, Popo." Tess guides her dod through o world of Legos.

Photographs by AMANDA FRIEDMAN



stuff of our childhoods. She'd just have to tell me what it looked like. And where to go. And when to stop.

As our taxi approached the Legoland Hotel, I struggled to keep up with her descriptions. "Papa, the hotel looks like Legos," Tess said, "and there's a dragon on it. Oh, and there's a horse. And a pirate." Her joyful inventory of massive Lego sculptures went on and on. The dragon, I learned, was taking a bath. "It's squirting real water at people!" Tess cheered. "For real!"

"Can you see the reception desk?" I asked as we entered the hotel.

"What's a reception desk?" she said.

"It's where the hotel people check us in."

"What's 'check us in'?"

Handing the power of navigation over to a 6-year-old is labor-intensive. When we travel, she fills in the details of the world around me, and then I feel like I live inside her picture. It's a unique intimacy, but given the vocabulary and attention span of a child, it can be frustrating for both of us. Often I have been in "a place" where I am surrounded by, you know, just "stuff."

Here in the hotel's lobby, Tess was already describing a world of strange sights. Children waded in a pool of Lego blocks. Some kids climbed the Lego castle, while others scrambled through a pirate ship festooned with manic toddlers.

"Hello, my little friends," a voice boomed. "Have you seen my horse?"

A Lego knight had come to life in front of us, animated by a large man inside a costume. Children screamed in terror and booked it for safety.

Luggage in tow, we found our way into the elevator, and the moment the doors shut, the hotel's music system cut out, a disco ball spun, and ABBA belted out eight bars of "Dancing Queen." For three floors Tess and I rode in a private dance party. Then, right before the doors opened again, the music faded and the soft bossa nova of "The Girl from Ipanema" resumed.

There was a glue holding all of this together: In every corner, a new surprise with endless possibility. Our hotel room had a treasure chest that could be unlocked by a code hidden in clues around the room. The floor in the hall had a whoopee cushion built into it. Pounce just right and a voice cries, "Oh! You stinky pig!"

THE NEXT DAY we tackled the 128-acre amusement park, bracing ourselves for the fun and inevitable taxation. What did I expect? The usual. Bare concrete, blazing sun, competing pop songs deafening us from every ride, endless lines, and of course over-sugared, crying children. What did we find? None of it.

Legoland is actually designed more in the spirit of a zoo or city green space. Pathways tempt you in every direction. I could feel the gentle slopes of hills and the dappled light of generous tree canopies. Bridges stitch over creeks. One of those bridges, activated by a pressure switch as we crossed, made spooky, creaking sounds as if about to collapse underfoot. Sure, the jungle-themed roller coaster had a robust queue of kids, but waiting was often integrated into the fun of a ride, if not essential to it. For instance, a boat carried Tess and me around a waterway to fire our ship's squirt guns at all the people waiting in line. But they had their own water cannons mounted on the fence. Their retort was full and wet. Tess told me when to fire. What she didn't tell me was when to duck.



All 27,000 of the park's sculptures are made by hand with Legos you can buy.

As we wandered the park, a map bloomed in my mind. This happens wherever I go: My feet trace a shape and that shape becomes a picture that I hold up to the world. Legoland was a pinwheel. Each spoke held a theme, be it castles and princesses, or pirates and ships, or animals and jungle adventure. As we walked clockwise from the gate, the rides grew in sophistication. First, a Duplo Village for the toddlers; then, Lego cars kids could drive around a little city to earn their Lego driver's license. (Tess refused to let me go for mine.) By the completion of the pinwheel, you could be seated in something as extreme as the Knights' Tournament, a ride in which two people are strapped into the clawed hand of a giant knight and shaken stupid.

"WHY AM I standing in sand?" I asked Tess at one point in the afternoon.

"Because you have to dig, Papa." →







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I was confused. We were standing ankle-deep in Tess's favorite ride, which wasn't really a ride at all.

"I found a foot," she shouted. "For real. A real dinosaur foot!"

We were excavating in a pit that concealed three concrete dinosaur skeletons. For the next half-hour we shoveled and brushed, following the leg up to the head and over to the tail. If travel is about making memories, Tess and I had just uncovered one together. She was so happy and astonished. So was I. The design of this park understood something elemental about kids and fun. No pandering. No condescension. Whatever it is, a ride or a hotel room or even a footbridge, you have to make room for imagination.

Tess continued to scoop and brush. Me too. It was something we could do together, a rarity in this world. As my hand felt around for the dinosaur's skull, something flashed. A memory. I am pretending to dig for dinosaurs on a beach near my home when I was Tess's age. I'm holding a big plastic bucket, the same kind in which we keep our Legos. My brothers and I would fight over that bucket, each of us trying to lay claim to the best pieces buried in the jumble. All those blocks of brilliant color—colors I haven't seen in 20 years. Now here I was doing these same things with my daughter. Digging sand. Playing Legos. It's as if we want to rebuild our childhood for our kids and hand it to them: "Here. Do it like this."

We strolled a path, munching fried apple slices dipped in whipped cream, until we reached the center of the pinwheel. There stood models of American cities. The New York skyline. New Orleans. The Las Vegas Strip. All were built to scale, and all to the level of detail that even the rooftops, which nobody can see, sport replicas of the air-conditioning units found on the actual buildings. The park let Tess and me hop the fence and wander among the cityscapes. She put my hand on tiny buses and trees, swiped them over a "lion"—which was, in fact, a sphinx. To touch these models felt like I was holding a pixelated world. Some 27,000 sculptures adorn the park, using more than 60 million Legos. Each one is assembled and maintained by hand. Nothing has been custom-made for the park; they only use what is commercially available. Theoretically, anybody can build whatever they see in Legoland.

TESS AND I made our way back to dig for more dinosaur bones. But a few scoops in, she said the one phrase that alarms me as a blind parent, no matter where we are.

"Where's the bathroom?"

I stared out at the big 128-acre blur of nothing in front of me.

"For real," she said.

Her voice had a familiar quiver in it. She was already frustrated by my inability to do what she needed the moment she needed it. Often it's fun to be in charge, taking the lead, when you're 6. Then, at a moment like this, I can feel Tess's burden. For real.

I grabbed her hand and let Tess kite me about the park, my 6-year-old frantically trying to intuit a way to the restroom. We swerved and angled as people pointed her up this path and that, past flying helicopters and a fountain that made music. I could sense her urgency brimming. She clipped me against benches and other children, until we suddenly stopped. Was it too late?

"Actually," she said, "let's go on this ride first."

She had meandered us into the line for the Coastersaurus. Its call had overtaken nature's.

Back in our room that night, Tess unlocked the treasure chest. Inside was something to build. A leafy tree. To think, Legoland and all our play over the years comes from something so small. Just a brick. One at a time, until here we are, a father and daughter playing side by side.

Tess opened the directions and asked for help. This is where our childhoods, and our Legos, differ. She only wants to build what the directions say. I don't. I can't. So instead of the tree, I rigged together an octopus. Tess immediately took it apart.

"That's not how you play, Papa. Let me show you."

And once again, as always, I followed her lead.

Ryan Knighton is a screenwriter and the author of Cockeyed. His stories have been featured on This American Life.

READY, SET, LEGO!

Unlike Disney World or the DMV, **Legoland** can be tackled with relative ease in a day. Your best bet is the Resort Hopper ($107), which gives you access to the amusement park, Sea Life Aquarium, and the soon-to-be expanded Legoland Water Park. To hit the bricks full-tilt, book a stay at the new **Legoland Hotel** (from $149), near the park's front entrance. Guests get in-room Legos, poolside movies, and on hour's head start at the park when it opens. *californio.legoland.com.*

DIGITAL EXTRA Where to stay, eat & play in the San Diego area: sunset.com/sandiego.

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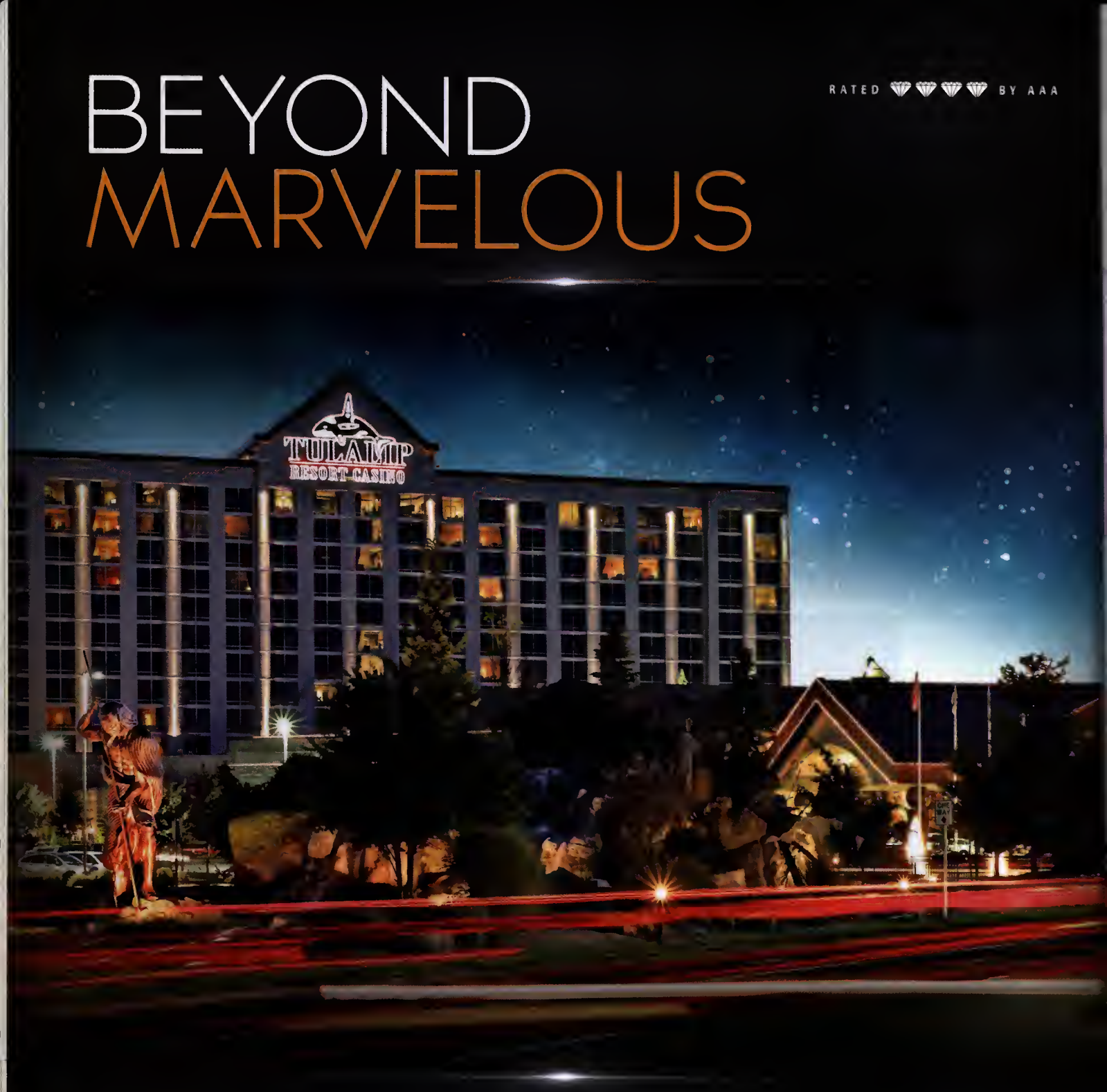
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Home & Garden



The dreamy dozen
12 GREAT PLANTS FOR CUTTING
p. 34

SEASONAL STYLE

BOUQUETS MADE EASY

With the color wheel as your guide, you'll be on your way to arranging flowers like a pro.

Photographs by JEFFERY CROSS

Bouquet making 101

IT'S EASY TO GRAB all your favorite flowers at the market and wind up making a bouquet that looks like horticultural confetti. Yes, flower arranging is an art, but it's also a bit of a science, says floral expert Debra Prinzing. Her method: Take cues from the color wheel.

"By using the color wheel, the process becomes almost like paint-by-numbers," says Prinzing, author of *Slow Flowers: Four Seasons of Locally Grown Bouquets from the Garden, Meadow and Farm* (St. Lynn's Press, 2013; $17). For example, you'll rarely go wrong by combining colors that are opposite each other on the wheel—yellow roses and purple lavender, say.

Once you've got a palette in place, accent the flowers with berries, branches, grasses, and herb foliage. After all, says Prinzing, "a bouquet is like a little garden in a vase."

By JOHANNA SILVER
Styled by LAUREN DUNEC



1 CONTRAST FOR DRAMA

Far a bold arrangement, pair hues that sit across from each other on the color wheel: red with green, orange with purple or blue. This works whether yau use vibrant versions of each calar or vary the intensity, says Prinzing.

PICTURED
A | Oronge Geraldton woxflawer (*Chomeloucium uncinotum*)
B | Purple seo hally (*Eryngium omethystinum*)
C | Orange rases

Use small filler flowers to add lushness.



2 USE ONE COLOR MANY WAYS

Here's a foolpraaf approach ta arranging: Mix several shades af one color. To add interest, vary the flowers' scale and textures—frilly to smoath.

PICTURED
D | Goldenrad (*Solidogo*)
E | Ranunculus
F | Alstraemeria faliage
G | Santolino

The more foliage, the more subdued the look.



3 KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

Hues that sit next to each other an the color wheel ("causins," as Prinzing puts it) make for harmonious bouquets. Blues and purples will feel tranquil together; reds and pinks, more energetic. "Green counts as neutral since it's the color af sa much foliage," says Prinzing, who uses it heavily in her arrangements.

PICTURED
H | Deep purple pincushian flawer (*Scobiaso otropurpureo*)
I | Pale pink lisianthus (*Eustamo grondiflorum*)
J | Pink-tipped hellebares
K | Bright pink rice flawer (*Pimeleo*)
L | Green arum leaves

Large leaves make great frames.

WHY HOMEGROWN BLOOMS ARE BETTER

Prinzing recommends buying flowers far yaur arrangements at the farmers' market. "They're much fresher since they've likely been cut within a day or twa of arriving at the market," says Prinzing. Also, lacally grown flawers are typically mare unusual and delicate than blooms that have been bred to survive long hauls ta the supermarket.

DIGITAL EXTRA Watch o video tutoriol for more tips on flower arronging: Blipp this poge or go to *sunset.com/arranging*.

West Essentials

{ OUR PICKS FOR WHAT'S ESSENTIAL IN THE WEST }

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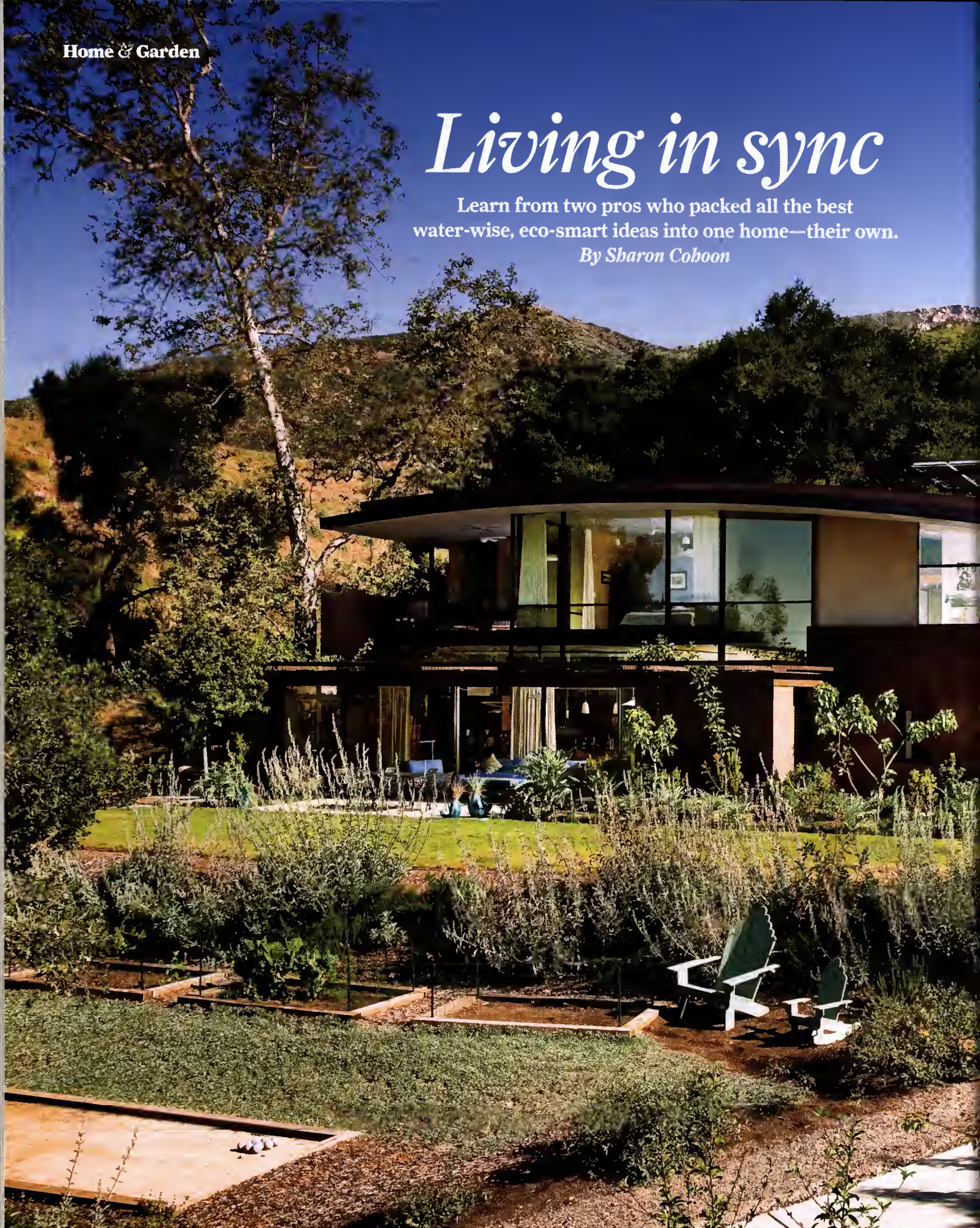
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Living in sync

Learn from two pros who packed all the best water-wise, eco-smart ideas into one home—their own.

By Sharon Cohoon





"DON'T BUY IT!" was architect Ken Radtkey's reaction when his then-girlfriend, Susan Van Atta, was considering the 1-acre parcel in Montecito, California. "The place was a mess," admits Van Atta, recalling the overgrown castor plants and tiny concrete house. "But as a landscape architect, I could visualize what it could become." After living there for a few years, Van Atta married Radtkey, and the couple decided to turn the subpar property into their dream home—one that's sustainable from the plantings to the rooftops.

The decision to maximize energy efficiency came easily, the two say. "The home was a laboratory for all the things we hadn't gotten the opportunity to do with clients," says Van Atta. Setting a portion of

THE BIG IDEAS

Lessons from the ultimate eco house

PLANT WITH A PURPOSE

Throughout the yard, Van Atta chase low-water natives, including *Fragaria vesca* (woodland strawberries) and Santa Barbara honeysuckle, which benefit birds and pollinating insects. The lawn is watered by below-ground irrigation to minimize evaporation.

the 2,500-square-foot house in a slope provides natural insulation and blends the structure with the surrounding hills. Solar panels supply all the electricity; fire-resistant green roofs are part insulation, part water collectors.

In the yard, Van Atta created flat tiers along the slope to make it more usable, then landscaped with natives and edibles. "Plants should earn their irrigation," she says. The tier nearest the house holds ornamental edible crops, while other levels include vegetable beds, a bocce ball court, a citrus orchard, and unthirsty native *Agrostis pallens* grass, where the family often plays lawn games (Van Atta's son, Ian, is 23, and the couple's son, Kellen, is 13).

The indoor-outdoor collaboration was even more satisfying than Van Atta and Radtkey had anticipated. "It's not just a box sitting on the land," says Radtkey. "The house works so well with the landscape, we almost think of it as all garden."

Architecture: Ken Radtkey; bbird.com. Landscape architecture: Susan Van Atta; va-la.com.





GARDEN DESIGN GUIDE

More than 50 of the West's most innovative gardens, including this one, are featured in the new *Sunset Western Garden Book of Landscaping* (Oxmoor House; $30).

Blipp to buy this book.

BUILD IN FLEXIBILITY

Above: Twa sliding glass packet daars—ane between the living raam and the veranda, the ather between the veranda and the garden—allaw the family ta vary haw much they apen the hause ta the autdaars. In winter, when bath daars stay clased, the space between becames a salar callectar, says Radtkey. "It gets warm enaugh ta heat the whale hause." The flaaring thraughaut the dawnstairs, cantinuing anta the veranda, is saw-cut salvaged Santa Barbara sandstane. "That's the stane yau expase when yau grade here, sa it laaks campletely at hame," Van Atta says.

PAGES 36–37: TYSON ELLIS. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: TYSON ELLIS (2); ANDREA JONES/GARDEN EXPOSURES PHOTO LIBRARY



"The house looks and feels larger than its square footage because we have so many outdoor rooms."
—SUSAN VAN ATTA



APPLY TIME-PROVEN TRICKS

Tap right: Most af the hame's sustainability comes fram law-tech ideos procticed far centuries. For exomple, o stoirway octs os a flue far warm air ta rise up and out, ond caal air ta circulote (on effect colled stack ventilotian). As o modern tauch, air plants ore maunted to the concrete walls.

WORK YOUR ROOF

Right: Soft curves, such as this roofline, ore o signature af Radtkey's orchitectural style. But the roof's sweep olso helps horvest roinfall. Water spills from the moin roof onta the garage roof meodow, and drips via gutters to a series of undergraund cisterns thot con stare up to 10,000 gallans af water.





"Our house is about guilt-free abundance, not sacrifice. We live well here, at no great expense to the environment."

—SUSAN VAN ATTA



GO WITH THE (LOCAL) GRAIN

Above: For most of the woodwork in the home, including the dining room table, the couple used eucalyptus lumber from trees harvested on the property. "It's one of my favorite things about the house," Von Atta says. "The wood brings so much meaning." Strand bamboo cabinets blend in with the eucalyptus and other natural materials in the home.

RELOCATE THE FIREPLACE

Below left: Rodtkey wanted to extend the time the family could spend on the master bedroom terrace—Von Atta uses it for yoga and the family likes to dine out there—so he installed a small gas fireplace. He prefers it to a wood-burning outdoor firepit because the energy use is limited. "It's better to have gas, turn it on, enjoy it for 20 minutes, then turn it off," Rodtkey says. →

DIGITAL EXTRA Top 50 water-wise plants: *sunset.com/unthirsty.*



FROM CENTER ANDREA JONES/GARDEN EXPOSURES PHOTO LIBRARY, TYSON ELLIS (2)



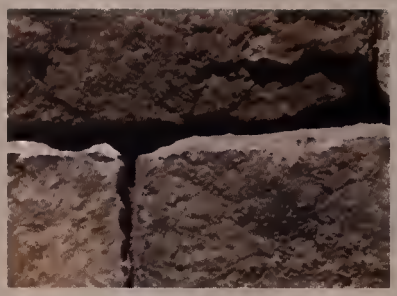
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GIVE FUNCTION GOOD FORM

Abave: The plot just autside the kitchen door warks hord but looks good. Van Atto designed the triple-bin compaster to mimic fencing and plonted grapevines ta train up the chick-en carral.



USE GREEN INSULATION

Right: Sedums in cantrosting colars turn the roof into on elevoted garden with on oceon view. They alsa regulote the hame's tempera-ture. "If it weren't plonted, this raaf wauld be 20° hotter in the summer," Von Atta says.

FROM TOP TYSON ELLIS; ANDREA JONES/GARDEN EXPOSURES PHOTO LIBRARY



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In the SUNSET GARDEN

TIPS FROM OUR TEAM



> *"Chervil's feathery sprigs give way to lacy white flowers that are bee magnets."*
>
> *JOHANNA SILVER, ASSOCIATE GARDEN EDITOR*



PLANT IT NOW

Three cheers for chervil

Not only does French chervil give soups and salads a certain je ne sais quoi, it's also pretty enough to double as a centerpiece. Sow seeds while the weather is still cool, and place in full sun; in a little more than a month, you'll have delicate, anise-scented sprigs. *Seeds available from reneesgarden.com.*



30-SECOND DIY

Contain yourself

If you're deep into container gardening, it's only natural to start seeing potential planters in all kinds of vessels—cookie tins, storage bins, water troughs. But don't forget drainage holes (rocks at the bottom of a pot won't cut it). To turn any vessel into a planter, drill one hole per square foot of container; use a 1/2-inch masonry drill bit for concrete or pottery, a metal bit for metal.

BREAKTHROUGH

A STAR IS BORN

Digiplexis 'Illumination Flome' mode its public U.S. debut in aur Test Garden, and we predict it will be ane af the seasan's big hits. A lave child af twa plants—a perennial faxglave and a Canary Islonds shrub—*Digiplexis* has Dr. Seuss–like leaves and flawers thot look like fax-gloves on steroids. It takes sun ta part shade, bloams from summer thraugh fall, and is hardy ta 15°. *Check facebook.com/Digiplexis Illuminatian for updotes an ovoilobility.*



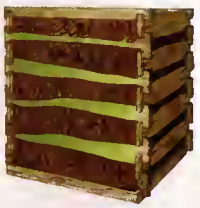
KNOW-HOW

Compost 1-2-3

Spring cleanup is prime pile-building time. If you're a first-timer, follow our simplest recipe.



1 Prep: Place your bin in a shaded spot. Your ingredients are browns (dried leaves, straw, or sawdust) and greens (lawn trimmings or fruit and vegetable scraps). Chop everything into 2- to 3-inch-long pieces.



2 Layer: Build a pile, alternating brown and green ingredients (brown layers should be twice as thick). Add water between each layer, and build until pile is 4 feet tall. End on brown to curb smell.



3 Keep it moving: Turn your pile once a week to add air. Once it resembles rich soil, harvest finished compost into a bucket, through a sifter.

COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: THOMAS J. STORY, JEFFERY CROSS, RACHEL WEILL, ILLUSTRATIONS: MICHAEL HOEWELER

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- Apply compost and slow-release fertilizer. Pinch back plants to encourage new growth. As new shoots appear, train them around the trellis; continue until you get desired height and canopy.
- Do one final pinch; this encourages blooming, which should start 4 to 5 weeks later. Sun Parasol® plants typically bloom mid-April to mid-October.
- Keep new growth in check as needed–Sun Parasol® plants can grow up to 8 inches per week.

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NORTHWEST

Your CHECKLIST



"The red wall makes a striking backdrop for the blue spruce."

KATHLEEN BRENZEL, GARDEN EDITOR

PLAN

For help updoting your perenniol gorden, pick up *Perenniols for the Pocific Northwest* (Sosquotch Books, 2013; $22) by Morty Wingote. It lists 500 of the best vorieties, with stunning photography by Jocqueline Koch.

PLANT

Pallenless double Orientol lilies ore wonderfully frogront but lock pollen to stoin your nose or clothes. Try dork pink 'Distont Drum', light pink 'Soft Music', or white 'Serene Angel'. Longfield Gordens is o good source. *longfield-gordens.com.*

The new 'Centenniol Blush' stor mognolio *(M. stelloto)* produces fragrant 5-inch soft pink flowers on o 15-foot-toll tree. Stor magnolio is omong the first smoll trees to blossom in spring; plont now, while it's in bloom.

In o sunny, well-amended gorden bed, plont raat craps (corrots, pototoes, ond others), onions, peos, spinoch, Swiss chord, ond members of the cobboge fomily.

Plant tuberous begonio tubers, hallow side up, under o holf-inch of soil in pots on o sunny windowsill. Move them into o portly shoded bed or contoiner when the soil worms in Moy.

Comellios (*C. joponico* types) stort blooming heavily this month; shop for them now. Pick ones whose folioge ond hobit you love; flowers lost just o month or two, but the folioge losts oll yeor.

MAINTAIN

Lowns stort growing ogoin this month, so it's the optimol time to fertilize (opply 2 pounds octuol nitrogen per 1,000 square feet) ond sow seed in bore or thin spots.

Divide ond replant summer- ond foll-flowering perenniols like oster, black-eyed Suson, chrysanthemum, glorioso doisy, Shosto doisy, ond 'Autumn Jay' sedum.

Cool-seoson weeds go from germinotion to flower and seed in just o few weeks. Rid beds of them quickly with a Dutch or Joponese hond hoe.

PROTECT

Hondpick slugs or set boit for them, since they con mow down seedlings before you even reolize the plants have germinoted. In the Test Gorden, we like to use Sluggo, o biodegrodable slug ond snoil boit.



WILL HYDE/MILE HIGH LANDSCAPING

GARDEN WE LOVE

Fire and ice

Playing off the cool blue conifer trees in this Denver garden, landscape designer Will Hyde took the rest of the palette in a warmer direction. He had the stucco wall in the back painted vibrant orange-red—"the color of California poppies," he says—and chose a metal bistro table and chairs to match. The flagstone patio and plasma-cut steel screen provide rusty tones, and low-voltage LED lighting adds moodiness throughout the space. **DESIGN** Mile High Landscaping, Denver; *milehighlandscaping.com.*

What grows in your climate zone? Find out at *sunset.com/zonefinder.* | Blipp this page to shop online.

Reported by JIM McCAUSLAND & ELIZA CROSS

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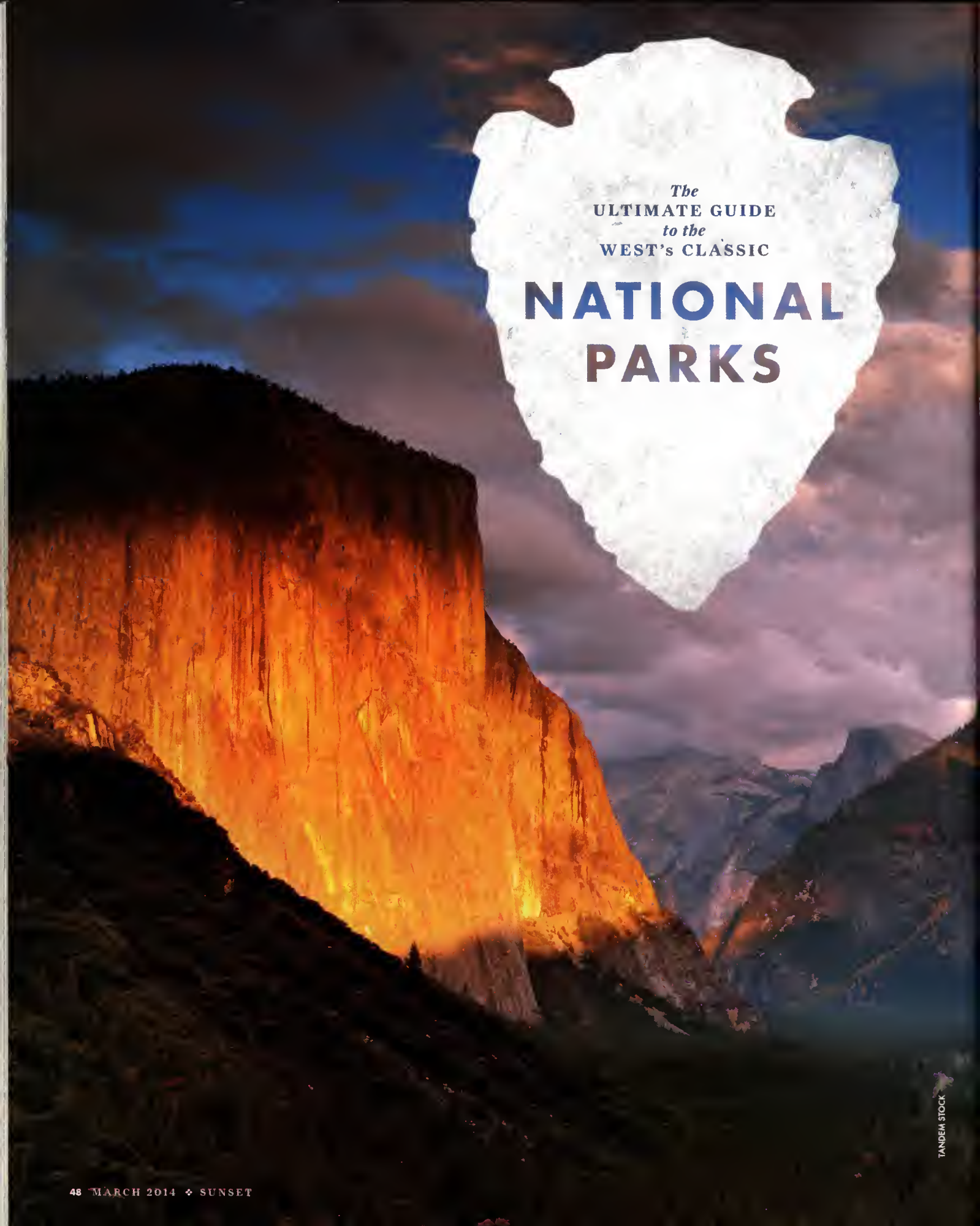
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The
ULTIMATE GUIDE
to the
WEST's CLASSIC

NATIONAL PARKS

TANDEM STOCK



Photographs by IAN SHIVE

GO NOW.

There's never been a better time to visit our national parks. For starters, they're open again, after last fall's maddening shutdown. They're sporting new trails and renovated lodges. And, in a case of addition by subtraction, Olympic National Park is set to complete the largest dam removal in history. For a song, you and your family can enjoy some of the world's greatest treasures—glacier-carved valleys and water-sculpted canyons and snow-dusted massifs that are like nothing else on Earth.

In the first issue of *Sunset*, way back in 1898—before the founding of the National Park Service in 1916, before John Muir's beard had even turned white—we ran an article on Yosemite, then one of four national parks. (Today, there are 59 national parks, including 40 in the West.) In this issue, we kick off a two-year celebration of the park service's upcoming centennial in 2016 with an exhortation by Nevada Barr, who worked at four parks and now writes mysteries that feature a crime-solving ranger. Her message: Get to a park. Pronto.

And then we dive in with a look at the six Western parks that have done the most to shape what comes to mind when someone says "national park." Yosemite. Yellowstone. Grand Canyon. Glacier. Olympic. Rocky Mountain. Whether you're a first-time visitor or a national park veteran, you'll find everything you need here—except a tank of gas and a taste for adventure.

When the government shut down in 1995, I was working as a seasonal ranger in Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas. Since the important people were told to stay home, it fell to a few of us seasonals to stand at the gates of the park and tell people the park was closed; a mountain, a river, a canyon—135 square miles of Texas—were closed. Two young men from Germany were turned away; a family from Israel; a couple from Vancouver, B.C.; two women backpackers from Minneapolis, down to do the backcountry trails and camp in Dog Canyon, told to drive on, America's wilderness was closed.

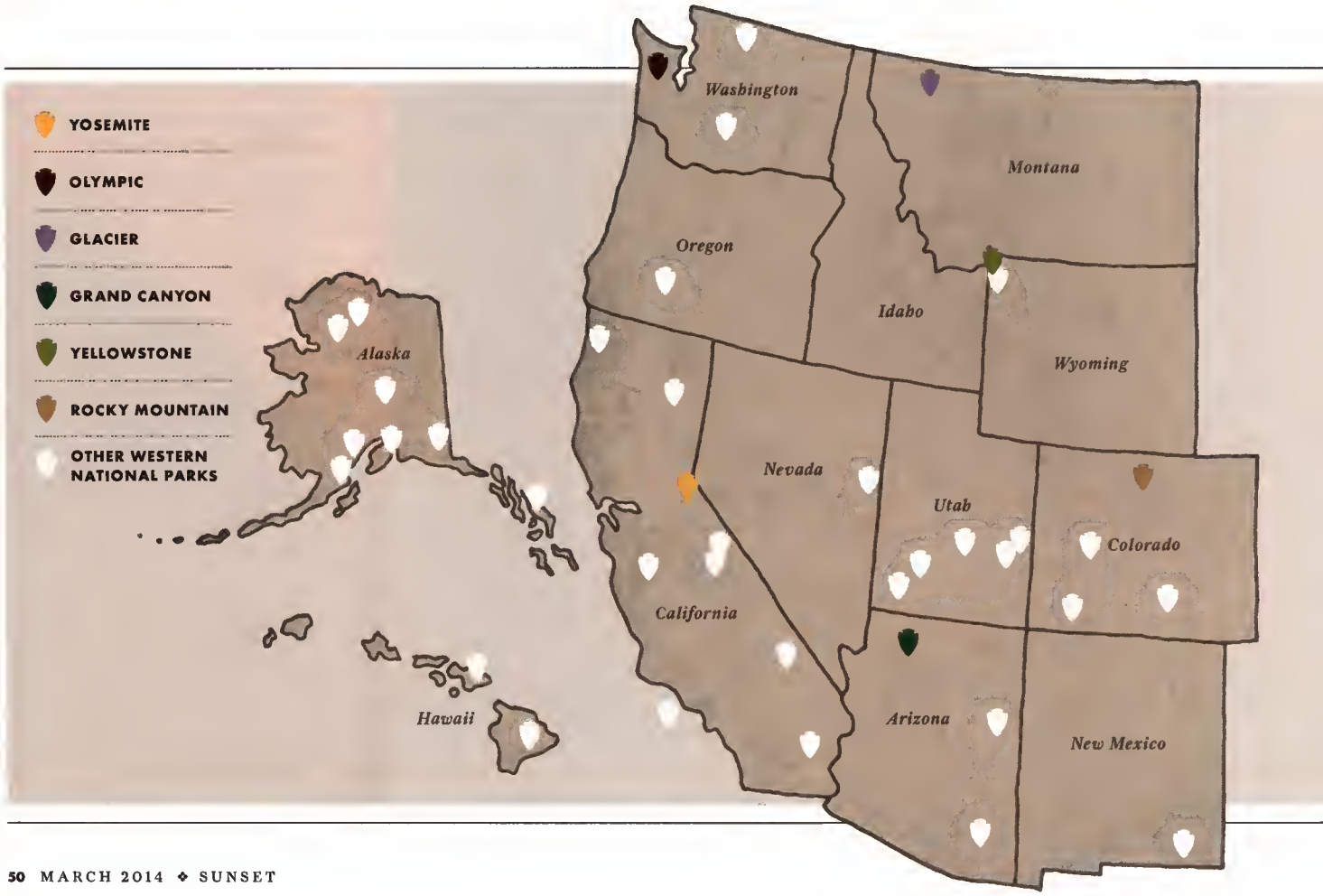
We were instructed to tell these unfortunates who'd come so far for nothing that, since the rangers were not on duty, there would be no searches, no rescues, no carry-outs; it was too dangerous. As if a walk on the wild side has to be under the benevolent gaze of a ranger.

I dearly wish I could say that, after the disappointment and disbelief I witnessed, I had turned a blind eye, told the visitors from afar that I was going on break. I'd be back in a half-hour and, if they were not in sight, it never happened. I wish I had thumbed my nose at the wrangling politicians and said: "Yes, go in. Picnic, hike, get bitten by a rattlesnake, wedge your arm in the rocks and cut it off with a Boy Scout knife, just *do* something." If I'd been on duty during last fall's shutdown, I would have.

The delicious sense of being small, not insignificant but a tiny particle of something monumental and mysterious, is hard to come by in the busy humanness of civilized life. In the parks, this oneness with the divine actually happens. When I was working in Isle Royale National Park on Michigan's Lake Superior, I wandered down to the dock at Windigo late one night, lay down on the planks, and stared into the sky. From the black fringe of trees, a green glow swirled over the night in a bloom of northern lights. As I lay there I felt as if I were falling up, sucked into the universe, an experience that was at once dizzying, terrifying, beautiful, unforgettable. When the littles of life swarm like harpies nibbling at my flesh, I can retreat to the memory of that moment and know peace.

These parks should be held sacred not just for Americans, but for people everywhere. If science is to be believed, our world is changing at a pace we may or may not survive. In the wake of humankind becoming powerful enough to scar and, perhaps, destroy the world that gave us birth, the adolescent US of A had the foresight to set aside pristine—or nearly so—lands, vast tracts of the Earth that have retained if not the reality, at least the memory of what the world was like before it was infested with our unchecked growth.

Other countries have castles, great walls, Eiffel and Leaning Towers—their history to hold for future



generations. Our history is of the Wild West, pioneers, prisoners shipped from England and slaves from Africa, Irish starving for work and food, Chinese building railroads, the desperate, exciting, courageous riffraff and downtrodden of the world who have come together to make America.

We live on electronic media and often spend days seeing nothing but pixels. The parks remind us life should be better than that. We can be strong and independent, self-reliant and brave. They remind us that the Earth was not meant to be paved, and we were not meant to be the sole inhabitants of it, that true beauty does not hang on walls, but is ever-changing, unpredictable, dangerous, and awesome. Experience is not meant to be virtual, but literal. The parks live in our muscles and guts, feet and eyeballs; the scents inform, the textures exhilarate, the weather teases and tests and plagues. Life is not a video game—it cannot be put on save and played at a later time. Life is *now* and should involve all five of our senses.

Forget aromatherapy. Go to Lassen, Crater Lake, Olympic and *breathe*; sit by a waterfall in Yosemite and fill your lungs with ozone. Forget texting on your cellphone. Go to Yellowstone and listen to geysers and bubbling mudpots, the original music of life. Forget the sauna and steam room; hike Arches, Death Valley, Great Basin in July. If you are a paraplegic, roll to the end of the pavement in Kings Canyon, get out of your chair, and grab fistfuls of pine needles, savor the moss and the dust. Lie on your back in silence and watch for birds, squirrels, and chipmunks.

Whatever your abilities, if you are alive and sensate, the parks will make you whole in a way manmade aids and entertainments cannot. Might you fall from a trail in Zion? Might a bear maul you in Glacier? Could a storm trap you on a mountain in Grand Teton? Yes! Isn't it grand? Do you want to die in a hospital bed, tubes in your orifices and a truncated view of a parking lot? Wouldn't you rather go down in glory, lunch for a cougar?

One monsoon season my first husband, Christopher Barns, and I went to Zion National Park with our friends Ed and Deb Pinson. Barns and I decided to hike the Virgin River Narrows. This is forbidden, due to the fact that the aptly named Narrows provides no place to escape to when rains foment flash floods. Many lives have been lost to these sudden violent rushes of water. About an hour in, it began to rain; two hours and the river was rising precipitously. Scared, cold, soaked to the skin, swimming around blind corners, avoiding strainers (downed trees and tangles of branches), slipping on boulders, as the rain came down and the waters rose, Barns and I did a seven-hour hike in four hours and change. Exhausted mentally and physically, we finally staggered out of the mouth of the gorge into Zion Canyon. There the waters grew wide and gentle. At the end of the trail, Deb, in a yellow raincoat, a bottle of red wine in one pocket and a chocolate bar in the other, stood waving to us. That remains my vision of heaven. Stumbling from hell into calm waters. If there is a god, I have no doubt She dispenses chocolate and Burgundy and wears a yellow slicker.

Suck it up and live in the wild for an hour, a day, a week. We can do it, we Americans, because we still have a wild, we have bears and wolves and badgers and deer, condors and eagles, turtles, lizards, tarantulas, and snakes.

People from all over the world come to the Grand Canyon or to Denali because they have nothing like it, have seen nothing like it, can imagine nothing like it, because there is nothing like it. The national parks are unique, grand, sublime, everything we seek in churches and temples and mosques. That sense of spiritual connection is waiting in the woods and deserts, in nights so dark the stars seem close enough to grab and the moon is bright enough to cast shadows.

The national parks were America's best idea. They went from an idea to a reality. Embrace them, savor them, use them, wallow in them. They will save your soul.

Nevada Barr is a former park ranger and author of the best-selling Anna Pigeon series, about a mystery-solving park ranger. The 18th Pigeon novel, Destroyer Angel, will be released April 1 (Minotaur; $27).

BEST *of the* WILD WEST

Nobody extols the eye-popping virtues of the Wild East. Or the Wild South. As a nation, when we've looked to connect with nature in its rawest, most magnificent stote, we've always turned to the Wild West, a regional nickname befitting our geography and geology, our flora and fauna. Forty of our national parks are in the 13 Western states. (In the other 37 states and scattered U.S. territories, there ore 19 national parks.) The West has the tallest trees, highest mountains, hottest deserts, unruliest coastline. And, fortunately, we have a National Park Service protecting them all. Over the next two years, as Sunset marks the park service's centennial, we will frequently return to the parks map (left) for help navigating the wildness we celebrate.

Enter our Nationol Porks photo contest for o chonce to win $150 toword o pork hotel stoy! Blipp this page to submit your photos or go to sunset.com/nationolporks.



BIG SPLASH Tenaya Lake has swimming, picnicking, and a stunning setting.

Giant sequoias, granite faces, waterfalls

YOSEMITE, CALIFORNIA

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 1890 | **2012 ATTENDANCE: 3,853,404** | **TIMES KIRK CLIMBS EL CAPITAN IN *STAR TREK V: THE FINAL FRONTIER*: 1** | **HEIGHT OF YOSEMITE FALLS, THE HIGHEST WATERFALL IN NORTH AMERICA: 2,425 FT.**

GOOD NEWS: Yosemite didn't burn down last summer. The Rim Fire that scorched parts of the Sierra Nevada region nibbled at some remote backcountry in Yosemite's far northwest, but you can't see evidence of it from any road in the park. Indeed, Yosemite remains the majestic showcase it's been ever since Abraham Lincoln signed a land grant in 1864 that preserved Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias. That act led to establishment of the park—and to the park system as a whole. Yosemite will observe the 150th anniversary of that event throughout the year, notably with restoration work to protect the root systems of the Mariposa Grove's big trees (the parking lot will be moved farther away, motorized tram tours phased out, and new trails built).

Even though it's one of the most celebrated (and busy) places on Earth, it's easy enough to get clear of the masses and gain your own understanding of the park's extraordinariness. Just walk along the banks of the Merced River almost anywhere in Yosemite Valley. There's El Capitan, the sheer granite monolith, the ultimate trophy for big-wall climbers. There's Yosemite Falls tumbling wildly from the valley rim, and there are the Royal Arches cliffs regally dwarfing the timbered façade of The Ahwahnee hotel. Across the valley are Half Dome and Glacier Point, and rising above them all is the Sierra Nevada high country, reminding you that a vast park looms beyond the vaunted valley. At your feet, in a clear eddy of the meandering river, you might see a reflection of the entire panorama.

But beyond the marquee destinations are wonders that get overlooked by visitors who assume that Yosemite Valley *is* the park (it only composes 3 percent). Mariposa Grove is one, as is the Wawona area, just north of the grove, where you can amble around a vast meadow ringed by mountain peaks or stroll to Chilnualna Falls, a quiet alternative to the always-packed Mist Trail. Even the valley itself harbors secrets. Hike the popular 1-mile paved trail to Mirror Lake, but don't end your excursion at the reflection of Half Dome—keep walking another mile or so and you'll have the valley's farthest nook mostly to yourself. Build in time for the park's high country as well. You'll reach more dramatic vistas and gain greater appreciation for the farsighted act that preserved one of our greatest treasures. *Park entry $20/vehicle; nps.gov/yose.* **—ROBERT EARLE HOWELLS**

PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO Anytime ather than Memarial Day thraugh Labar Day. Tiaga Raad and Glacier Paint Raad (beyand Badger Pass ski area) are clased in winter, but atherwise the park is wide apen, and beautiful, year-raund.

WHERE TO STAY Ladging ranges fram The Ahwahnee at the high end ta Curry Village cabins at the law end. **Wawona Hotel**, with its 19th-century decar, lack af TVs and phanes, and perch abave Wawana Meadaw, is a warthy alternative, and easier ta baak. Campers: Rather than vying far a spat in the crawded valley, try ane af the campgraunds alang Tiaga Raad. **Yosemite Creek** is first came, first served, blessedly quiet, and a 1-haur drive fram the valley. *Wawana: Open Apr 11; fram $113; yasemitepark.cam. Yasemite Creek: $10;* recreatian.gav.

FIRST-TIME ESSENTIALS Hike ta Yasemite Falls (which usually dries up mid-August), stick a tae in the Merced River, and take a meal, ar a raam, in the 1927 **Ahwahnee** hatel, which has views af Half Dame, Glacier Paint, and the Rayal Arches. Or simply bask beside the huge fireplace in the Great Launge. Hint: The Ahwahnee Bar affers riveting views, as well as an inexpensive, kid-friendly menu. *Raams fram $399; yasemitepark.cam.*

SEEN IT ALL BEFORE? The **Valley Loop Trail**, a 13-mile faatpath with views af Upper Yasemite Fall and Bridalveil Fall, rings the western part af Yasemite Valley—and almast na ane hikes it. Pick it up behind Yasemite Ladge ar at Camp 4, ar chaase a sectian and then catch a free shuttle when yau're dane. *nps.gav/yase.*

BEAT THE CROWDS If yau have ta ga in summer, the park's free buses are key. Just park ance, then shuttle painlessly ta all the Yasemite Valley attractians. Or drive ta the less-crawded high cauntry. Tiaga Raad, generally



open from late May to mid-November, brings the High Sierra close to your window. Hop out at Olmsted Point and make the short walk to a view of Tenaya Canyon and the towering backside of Half Dome. *Shuttle info: yarts.com.*

TRAVEL TIPS Booking a campsite is like trying to score Stones tickets. To snag a summer spot, log on to *recreation.gov* at 7 a.m. on the 15th of the month, five months in advance of your visit, and start clicking. Or opt for a first-come, first-served campground such as Porcupine Flat, Tamarack Flat, White Wolf, or half of the sites in Tuolumne Meadows. Just get there early—sites can fill up by 8:30 a.m. *From $10; recreation.gov.*

VOICES of the PARKS

Lee Stetson | **MARIPOSA COUNTY SUPERVISOR AND YOSEMITE-BASED JOHN MUIR REENACTOR**

THE SIERRA HIGH

"Three or four years ago, we had had very little snow. At the first of the year, Tioga Road was open and you could still cross the Sierra. So everybody I know who lives on this side went up to enjoy Tenaya Lake. There was ice hockey as well as people just walking out on this incredible lake. My wife and I and a couple of friends walked farther back to the Gaylor and Granite Lakes and people were ice-fishing, which I had never seen before. It was a beautiful sunny day, clear as a bell. And the ice—I actually measured it with a stick—was well over 2 feet thick. But it's an endless procession of memorable days up there. One of my favorite Muir quotes is: 'Wherever you happen to find yourself in the Sierra, it always seems at that moment, of all places, the best.' To escape worries and duties of all kinds, there's nothing like finding yourself centered by the gentle natural process of the High Sierra."

Download the new NPS Yosemite app—funded by the Yosemite Conservancy—to browse the park's top wow spots, build itineraries, and find campsites and hotels. *Free; available in Apple's App Store and Google Play.*



BRAD BECK/TANDEM STOCK

VOICES of the PARKS

Dr. Judith Harpel

CURATOR OF THE BRYOPHYTE COLLECTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA HERBARIUM

THE GREEN ROOM

"For the average person, the Hoh Rain Forest is the best place to see mosses. It's one of the wettest spots in North America, and the biomass of the moss—the sheer volume of plant matter—that builds up because of all the moisture is greater than, say, you'd find at Redwood National Park along the coast of Northern California. Envision walking up a trail and the trees are literally draped with this yellow-green moss. It's like walking into a Disney set—the huge, festooned mats are so massive and so abundant that they deaden most noise. It gives you this amazing feeling of walking into a cathedral. All you hear are the birds and whatever insects are in the environment. It's absolutely one of my favorite places for moss."



PACIFIC HEIGHTS Salitary surfers ond sea stacks dot the moody Olympic coost.

Wild beaches, rain forests, Roosevelt elk

OLYMPIC, WASHINGTON

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 1938 | **2012 ATTENDANCE: 2,824,908** | **NUMBER OF ROOSEVELT ELK IN THE PARK (THE WORLD'S LARGEST HERD): 5,000** | **NUMBER OF PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES UNIQUE TO OLYMPIC: 24**

ONE OF THE MOST amazing things about Olympic National Park is perhaps what *isn't* here: the 108-foot Elwha Dam and, soon, the 210-foot Glines Canyon Dam. A century ago, the roaring Elwha River cut across the entire park and supported five salmon species, including chinook that weighed more than 100 pounds. The dams, built in the early 1900s, stopped the waterway and the fish in their tracks. But by September, the full length of the river will, once again, flow from its source in the Olympic Mountains through a green river valley to the Strait of Juan de Fuca—the happy result of the largest dam-removal project ever.

So chances are, if you come here, you'll get wet—and not just from a dip in the river. The Hoh Rain Forest, a swath of green on the western edge of the park, is one of the dampest places in the continental United States (it soaks in an average of 12 to 14 feet of rain each year). But soggy shoes are a small price to pay for a trek through Olympic's stunning, moisture-rich places, like the Hoh's Hall of Mosses Trail, where stands of 250-foot-tall hemlock and Sitka spruce drip with brilliant emerald drapes. That precipitation has nourished some of the tallest trees on Earth, fueled a dozen major river systems, and fostered species found nowhere else, making the park both a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site. The moisture even moves mountains: Scientists say that the park's 7,980-foot Mt. Olympus would be the highest peak in the world if rain didn't constantly erode it.

Then there's Olympic's sliver of rugged Pacific coastline, 73 miles of pristine sand scattered with driftwood and busy tidepools on its western edge. You'll likely see a bald eagle and maybe even a migrating whale. And if you need to dry out, remember this secret: The northeast corner is protected from ocean-borne storms by the Olympic Mountains' massive peaks—and for every mile you travel toward Port Angeles, the peninsula's largest town, the annual precipitation decreases by a full inch. *Park entry $15/vehicle; nps.gov/olym.* —**EVELYN SPENCE**

PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO Waterfalls ore ot their feracious best in spring ond early summer, but roin con dampen spirits. July ond August bring drier doys—and crawds (a gaad time to moke use of Olympic's 922,000 ocres).

WHERE TO STAY For storm watching ond tidepoaling, yau con't beot the oceanside locotion of shobby-chic **Kalaloch Lodge**. Prefer impressive trees? **Lake Quinault Lodge** is a stane's thraw from the warld's largest Sitko spruce ond Western red cedar. *Kalalach: Fram $99; thekala lachladge.cam. Lake Quinault: Fram $119; alympic natianalparks.com.*

FIRST-TIME ESSENTIALS Drive up to 5,242-faat Hurricane Ridge, the easiest way to reoch the heort af the mountains; from there, hike holf-mile-long High Ridge for porkwide views. Then hit the caost (a three-hour drive fram Hurricone Ridge) and beoch-comb omong towering seo stocks ot Secand Beoch.

SEEN IT ALL BEFORE? Loke Crescent is the only ploce where rore Beordslee "blue-bock" trout live. Rent a rod (ond o conoe) from **Lake Crescent Lodge** to hook a closer look. *Pale rental $8/half-day, canaes fram $20/haur; olympicnatianal parks.cam.*

BEAT THE CROWDS Hurricane Ridge is leost congested befare 10 a.m. ond ofter 5 p.m. (olsa the best time to snap photos and, aften, to spot wildlife). If the Hoh Roin Forest is averrun, try the Quinoult Roin Forest or The Queets, which is obout twa haurs sauth. For crowd-free beoch time, pick one (like Second Beach) thot requires o short wolk or hike.

Grizzlies, 762 alpine lakes, namesake glaciers

GLACIER, MONTANA

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 1910 | **2012 ATTENDANCE: 2,162,035** | **PERCENTAGE OF THE PARK'S LAKES THAT ARE UNNAMED: 83** | **NUMBER OF GLACIERS REMAINING: 20** | **YEAR GLACIER IS EXPECTED TO BE GLACIERLESS DUE TO RISING TEMPERATURES: 2030**



PADDLE PLAY Canoeists ply their way across Swiftcurrent Lake to Grinnell Point.

FOR THE CLASSIC Glacier Park experience, drive the Going-to-the-Sun Road up to Logan Pass, park, then hike a mile into the Highline Trail. Here's what you'll see: mountain after mountain reaching north, into Canada, seemingly to the edge of the planet—Glacier's breathtaking trademark.

All national parks provide a way to celebrate the natural world. But Glacier does so in a particularly visceral, powerful way. More than 90 percent of the park is managed wilderness, meaning that within those 900,000 acres, you'll find no roads, no developed campgrounds, not even the slightest echo of Wi-Fi. Cliff-hugging Going-to-the-Sun Road—one of the greatest drives in the world—is the only highway that crosses the park. Want to experience the heart of Glacier? Lace up your hiking boots.

This sense of being on the very edge of the wild gives Glacier a special aura. There are comforts here, even luxuries—paradoxically, the historic lodges here are among the most elegant in the park system. But you're always aware that a few hundred yards from the Adirondack chair where you're sipping your gin and tonic, nature begins.

That natural world is dominated by mountains so jagged the region's Native Americans referred to them as "the backbone of the world." (Remnant glaciers still ride the mountains' flanks like epaulets on generals' shoulders, but in a warming world, they're shrinking fast. One estimate holds Glacier will have none left by 2030.) Between them shimmer hundreds of glacial lakes—long, skinny lakes like Swiftcurrent and McDonald, and chains of small "paternoster" lakes, so named because their round shapes resemble rosary beads.

The topography dazzles first, but then you begin to notice the park's other natural wonders: Wildflowers, like purple aster and yellow glacier lilies. Birds, like harlequin ducks in the lakes, golden eagles in the sky. Animals, like mountain goats, elk, and (ideally from a safe distance) grizzly bears, of which Glacier has an estimated 300.

It is an amazing spectacle—a park that is at first a little intimidating and then, quickly, exhilarating. No wonder that John Muir wrote about Glacier with particular passion: "Give a month at least to this precious reserve. The time will not be taken from the sum of your life. Instead of shortening, it will indefinitely lengthen it and make you truly immortal." *Park entry $25/vehicle; nps.gov/glac.* —**PETER FISH**



VOICES of the PARKS

Kyle Johnson | **WILDERNESS SPECIALIST AND PARK RANGER WITH GLACIER NATIONAL PARK**

BEAR WITNESS

"A good encounter with a bear is what we call a 'Glacier Park moment.' We have the opportunity—with many years of training—to handle grizzly bears, something the visiting public rarely sees. A few years back, we had a bear that had become overly familiar with humans. She wasn't aggressive, but her tolerance was unacceptable for most people. People could be sitting along the trail resting and she'd walk by 20 feet away. So we wanted to put a GPS collar on her to figure out if she was actually attracted to people. We caught one of her cubs [in a no-harm trap] so the wildlife biologist and I walked over—he had a tranquilizer; I had a shotgun in case things went bad. Our goal was to get mom to charge us to protect her cub, who was about 30 yards away, so that we could tranquilize her and put a radio telemetry dart in her. And that's what happened. We were able to get the collar on her, release the cub, and start tracking her. It was a pretty exciting day—we handled three different grizzly bears before 1 o'clock."



BACKCOUNTRY
A mauntain goat, a park symbal, stands sentinel at Hidden Lake.



PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO Summer's prime time here (Going-to-the-Sun Road doesn't fully open until the third week in June). Compared with other parks, Glacier seldom feels crowded even in midsummer, except in the Lagan Pass area. But if you can swing an early September visit, you get the best of all worlds: Everything's open, weather is great, and crowds are sparse.

WHERE TO STAY The 99-year-old **Many Glacier Hotel** may have the most beautiful setting of any hotel in a national park; its views of Swiftcurrent Lake and the Rockies are so stunning, people sometimes have a hard time breaking away to see the rest of Glacier. Just outside the park, **Glacier Park Lodge** is famous for its three-story lobby columned by towering Douglas firs. And the Swiss-inspired **Lake McDonald Lodge** is charming on a smaller scale. Two other park lodgings, **Swiftcurrent** and **Rising Sun Motor Inns**, are more modern and utilitarian. If these are booked, St. Mary, at the eastern border, and West Glacier, at the western, have plenty of motels. *Glacier Park Lodge: From $152; glacierparkinc.com. Other park lodging: From $79; glaciernationalparklodges.com.*

FIRST-TIME ESSENTIALS Going-to-the-Sun Road offers 50 miles of occasionally scary but mostly awe-inspiring twists and turns and views. Lagan Pass, at the road's crest, has an engaging visitor center and serves as starting point for Highline Trail hikes. Another classic day hike leads from Many Glacier Hotel to Grinnell Glacier—the bonus here is that you can arrange to start the hike with a boat trip across Swiftcurrent Lake, then make the moderately steep climb up to the glacier. Other must-dos: Cruise Lake McDonald on the historic wooden boat, ***DeSmet***, or tour the park on one of the beloved red open-top buses. *Boat tours $16; glacierparkboats.com. Bus tours from $30; glaciernationalparklodges.com.*

SEEN IT ALL BEFORE? Soak up the architectural grandeur at two of the park's historic hotels, Many Glacier Hotel and Lake McDonald Lodge. Many Glacier even has its own ranger-led tours. Both are astonishing achievements: ornate resorts built in a part of the world where winters can last eight snow-filled months.

BEAT THE CROWDS **Two Medicine Lake**, on the park's eastern side, doesn't get the attention Lake McDonald does. But it's a quiet place to spend the day, with hiking and rental boats. Canoes from *$18/hour; glacierparkboats.com.*

All Glacier prices are from 2013.



VOICES of the PARKS

Thomas Ratz

SERVER AT EL TOVAR AND, WITH 34 YEARS OF SERVICE, ONE OF THE HOTEL'S LONGEST-STANDING EMPLOYEES

IT NEVER GETS OLD

"I have a collection of Grand Canyon memorabilia that includes several hundred menus from El Tovar and Bright Angel going back to 1908. The one menu item we still have: prime rib of beef *au jus*. I also have a crazy number of postcards from the park; letters that people wrote on the hotel's stationery, talking about their experience working here; hotel china and silverware; 180 or so Kolb Brothers photographs; and people's old snapshots. You could get them developed here at the hotel the next day, even when the hotel first opened in 1905.

"One of my favorite details is on the north porch. It's a quote: 'Dreams of mountains in their sleep, they brewed of things eternal.' It was written by a ticket agent for the Santa Fe Railroad. You can hardly see it, so you have to pay attention. Any economic slump, we're still busy. It's really amazing. I never get tired of it: During the sunrise, sunset, when the sun hits formations in the canyon, it's breathtaking. Even after all these years, I still run out with my camera. Still."

JUSTIN BAILIE/TANDEM STOCK



WORTH THE TREK South Kaibab Trail is one of two main routes to the canyon floor.

Mesmerizing views, mule rides, historic architecture

GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 1919

2012 ATTENDANCE: 4,421,352

AGE, IN YEARS, OF THE OLDEST LAYER OF ROCK (SCHIST) IN THE CANYON: 2 BILLION

NUMBER OF PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE STAYED AT EL TOVAR: 8

WHILE IT'S UNDOUBTEDLY true that every American should see Grand Canyon National Park at least once, 10 visits may be a more fitting life goal. First-timers invariably feel either overwhelmed by the sheer immensity of the 277-mile-long canyon or confounded that the iconic labyrinth of eroded sandstone monoliths, towers, and temples appears almost unreal, like nothing so much as a giant postcard. Two billion years of geology require more than the six hours the typical visitor spends on the South Rim. The canyon gets better the longer you're here, as formations dramatically transmute from a fiery red to a mellow violet as the light and weather change. An extended stay also gives you a chance to hike different sections of the 13-mile Rim Trail and escape the most crowded overlooks. And considering that the canyon is a mile deep, no trip is complete without at least a short trek below the rim, a trip that only a small percentage of visitors ever take. The payoff? An appreciation of the canyon's immensity, its complex geology, and the manifold colors and textures of its rock layers. Climbing up is always a challenge, but recent improvements to the South Kaibab and Bright Angel Trails make the steep ascent a little more pleasant. Back on the rim, Grand Canyon Village is a gallery of historic Southwestern architecture, most notably the buildings by pioneering architect Mary Colter. As you walk around the village and catch glimpses of the canyon, you're bound to feel that this is everything that a national park should be. *Park entry $25/vehicle; nps.gov/grca.* —**MATTHEW JAFFE**

PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO During the shoulder seasons—early spring, before June, and after September—when crowds are relatively small.

WHERE TO STAY Along the rim, renovations are nearly complete at the 1905 **El Tovar Hotel**, where a few suites have canyon views. Recently remodeled, the modern **Thunderbird Lodge** has many rooms with partial canyon views. *Rooms at El Tovar from $186, Thunderbird from $194; grandcanyonlodges.com.*

FIRST-TIME ESSENTIALS You'll definitely want to dine in the native stone and Douglas fir dining room at El Tavor and see its murals of Southwest Native American tribes. Far one af the few gaad laaks at the Coloroda River fram the Sauth Rim and to visit a Mary Calter masterpiece, drive out ta her Desert View Watchtawer, which was inspired by ancient structures in the Faur Corners area.

SEEN IT ALL BEFORE? The vast majority of visitars never get past Grand Canyon Villaga. Sa bus or drive to Hermit's Rest, then walk a shart distance and yau'll almast certainly find salitude. And though it's a bit af a trek—about 215 miles from the Sauth Rim—the forested Narth Rim is open from May 15 ta December 1 and receives only 10 percent af the visitars.

BEAT THE CROWDS Yes, yau have to see the Sauth Rim, but leave time for the narth side af the park. There's nothing quite like taking in the panarama from the verandas af the **Grand Canyon Lodge–North Rim**, where, if you plan ahead, you might scare a coveted rim-view cabin. For a great intro hike and spectacular views, take the 3-mile Transept Trail, which leaves from the praperty. *From $85; grandcanyonforever.com.*



Geysers, bison, its own Grand Canyon

YELLOWSTONE, WYOMING

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 1872

2012 ATTENDANCE: 3,447,729

YEAR FUTURE PRESIDENT GERALD FORD WAS A RANGER HERE: 1936

TEMPERATURE OF UNDERGROUND WATER IN PARK GEYSERS: ABOVE 400°F

MINUTES A MOOSE CAN STAY UNDER WATER: 3

NUMBER OF BISON LIVING IN THE PARK: 4,600



STREAM LINE The Grond Conyon of the Yellowstone near Artist Point.

YELLOWSTONE IS WHERE planet Earth really shows off. You want geysers shooting superheated water and steam hundreds of feet into the air? You got it. Herds of bison, otherworldly hot springs, and a canyon that rivals the Grand in beauty? Check, check, and check.

Yellowstone does things big. It's the world's very first national park (Yosemite was set aside earlier, but as a *state* park) and still among the nation's largest—at 3,472 square miles, it's bigger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined. It's vast enough, and unspoiled enough, to provide habitat for animals from grizzlies to wolves to trumpeter swans—a wealth of wildlife that inspired the park's nickname, America's Serengeti.

That scale can be paralyzing, so you need to strategize how you'll spend time here, the way you would when planning a visit to a foreign country. Start with the geysers (there are more than 300 of them, approximately half of all the geysers on Earth). Old Faithful still performs every 60 to 110 minutes, a model of reliability in the geyser world. Other highlights: Steamboat, the tallest in the world; cute, conical Beehive; and a host of other geothermal features, including the rotten-eggy—but gorgeous—mudpots and ethereal fumaroles (steam vents).

Now for the animals. Bison are all over the park and impossible to miss. Elk, too, are relatively easy to spot. To ogle bears—black and grizzly—head to Lamar Valley, and for bighorn sheep, keep an eye on the cliffs spanning the 5 miles of road from Gardiner, Montana, to Mammoth Hot Springs. And about 100 gray wolves, reintroduced to Yellowstone in the 1990s, can be spotted near the Blacktail Plateau (they're easiest to glimpse in winter).

Finally, there's the serene, horizon-spanning landscape. Even in the busy summer, there is a profound spaciousness to Yellowstone that completely captures the senses. Don't miss Yellowstone Lake, the largest freshwater lake above 7,000 feet in North America. Or a trip to the park's own Grand Canyon, whose walls, in certain light, shine the color of spun gold. The canyon also has not one but two magnificently cascading waterfalls.

But the ultimate gift of the park's extravagance? When you're in Yellowstone, you never think about being someplace else. *Park entry $25/vehicle; nps.gov/yell.* —P.F.

VOICES of the PARKS

T. Scott Bryan

AUTHOR, *THE GEYSERS OF YELLOWSTONE*

HEAT SPRINGS ETERNAL

"Yellowstone has more than 300 geysers—no place on Earth comes remotely close to the concentration of geysers that Yellowstone has. They're all part of the volcanic system that underlies the park. Every geyser is a unique individual. Fan and Mortar [in Upper Geyser Basin] are siblings and they usually erupt together, water shooting out in all directions. Grand Geyser, near Old Faithful, sometimes shoots 200 feet in the air. Each of them has its own little quirks and habits. And they change all the time. You can study a geyser and think you understand it and then it will start doing something new. I try not to have geyser favorites—I agree with a friend of mine who says that her favorite geyser is always the one she's looking at right now."



PLAIN SIGHT
Yellowstone has the largest wild bison herd in the United States.



PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO Even in this big park, summer gets busy and compsites and rooms can be hord ta find. September can be ideal—daytime temps in the 60s, clear skies, and beoutiful fall color. Winter is cold but affers good crass-cauntry skiing and world-class wildlife-watching, and you'll feel like you have Yellowstone almast to yourself.

WHERE TO STAY For histary and otmosphere, try the **Old Foithful Inn** (nate: it boaks up early). Equally histaric, ond sametimes easier ta reserve, are the Mammath Hot Springs and Loke Yellawstone Hatels. Outside the park, Gordiner and West Yellowstane, MT, have plenty of matels. *Old Faithful: Fram $109; yellawstonenatianalparklodges.cam.*

FIRST-TIME ESSENTIALS Start with the park's hydrathermol moscat, Old Foithful, but don't ignare other nearby spauts, like those an aptly nomed Geyser Hill. Fram there, it's o shart walk to the Old Faithful Inn *(apens May 9)*, the magnificently timbered ladge that's o heavenly hybrid af castle ond treehause. Then head ta the Grand Canyon of the Yellawstone: Trails alang both narth and south rims give unforgettable views of the canyon ond its waterfolls. Finally, hit Lomar Valley, a favored lacatian to observe Yellowstane wildlife, fram bisan ta elk ta river otters.

SEEN IT ALL BEFORE? At 132 square miles, Yellowstane Lake is hard ta miss. But ta really oppreciate it, rent a rawboot fram Bridge Bay Marina and paddle out onto the blue waters. Postvoyoge, grab a view-filled meal at serene, butter yellaw **Loke Yellowstone Hotel & Cobins**. *yellowstane natianalparkladges.cam.*

BEAT THE CROWDS The Old Faithful Villoge ond Canyan Villoge oreas are the busiest parts af the pork; Mammath Hat Springs and especially the Tawer–Raosevelt area, bath in the park's narthern half, seem quiet by camporison. And wherever you ore, yau can avaid throngs by heading aut early—either on a marning ranger-led walk ar an yaur own. (If yau're hiking sala, moke sure ta pay attention ta all the bear clasure signs.)



ALPINE GLOW Claud-shrauded Langs Peak, as viewed from the Bear Lake area.

Peaks, bighorn sheep, Trail Ridge Road

ROCKY MOUNTAIN, COLORADO

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 1915 | **2012 ATTENDANCE:** 3,229,617 | **WEIGHT OF A BIGHORN RAM HORN:** 30 POUNDS | **YEARS AN ALPINE CUSHION PLANT CAN LIVE:** 150

THERE'S NO BETTER PLACE to get a jolt of sheer alpine wonder than Rocky Mountain National Park. Scrambling to the top of one of its 77 adrenaline-pumping peaks over 12,000 feet and gazing out at a toothy tableau of snowcapped ridges and spring green alpine tundra, the park's signature feature, is a top-of-the-world moment. It's no wonder that scaling 14,259-foot Longs Peak, the park's only Fourteener, is a life-list goal for many. But it's not an easy check mark, requiring an exhausting 12-hour round-trip trek to summit.

Surrounding Longs is a stellar supporting cast of Thirteeners, which pepper the park's 415 square miles. About a third of the park is tundra—a vast, treeless expanse that's as harsh as it is beautiful. Five minutes here sends visitors scrambling for their jackets, even in July (some parts see just 30 frost-free days each year). Yet wildflowers brighten the wind-raked tundra, and reaching the wow spots requires little effort thanks to Trail Ridge Road, which climbs above the treeline and remains there for 11 panorama-blessed miles.

The beauty, easy access, and proximity to big cities (Denver is a 90-minute drive away) make Rocky Mountain one of the most visited parks in the system. If you drive Trail Ridge Road on a summer afternoon, you might think all 3 million annual visitors are on the two-lane highway at one time. "But if you just adjust your schedule a bit, you'll be surprised at how uncrowded it is," says Kyle Patterson, the park's public information officer. The three hours after sunrise or before sunset offer the thinnest crowds, she says—and provide the most frequent wildlife encounters.

Mornings, you're almost guaranteed to glimpse an elk herd sauntering across Moraine Park. And a natural mineral lick at Sheep Lakes attracts so many bighorn sheep that, from late May through late June, a volunteer crew nicknamed the Bighorn Brigade directs traffic on roads near Sheep Lakes so flocks can cross unharmed.

Last year's fires and floods damaged some trails and parkland. Although most will be repaired before summer's crush of visitors, some—such as Old Fall River Road, a one-way scenic drive—won't reopen this year. *Park entry $20/vehicle; nps.gov/romo.* —**KELLY BASTONE**

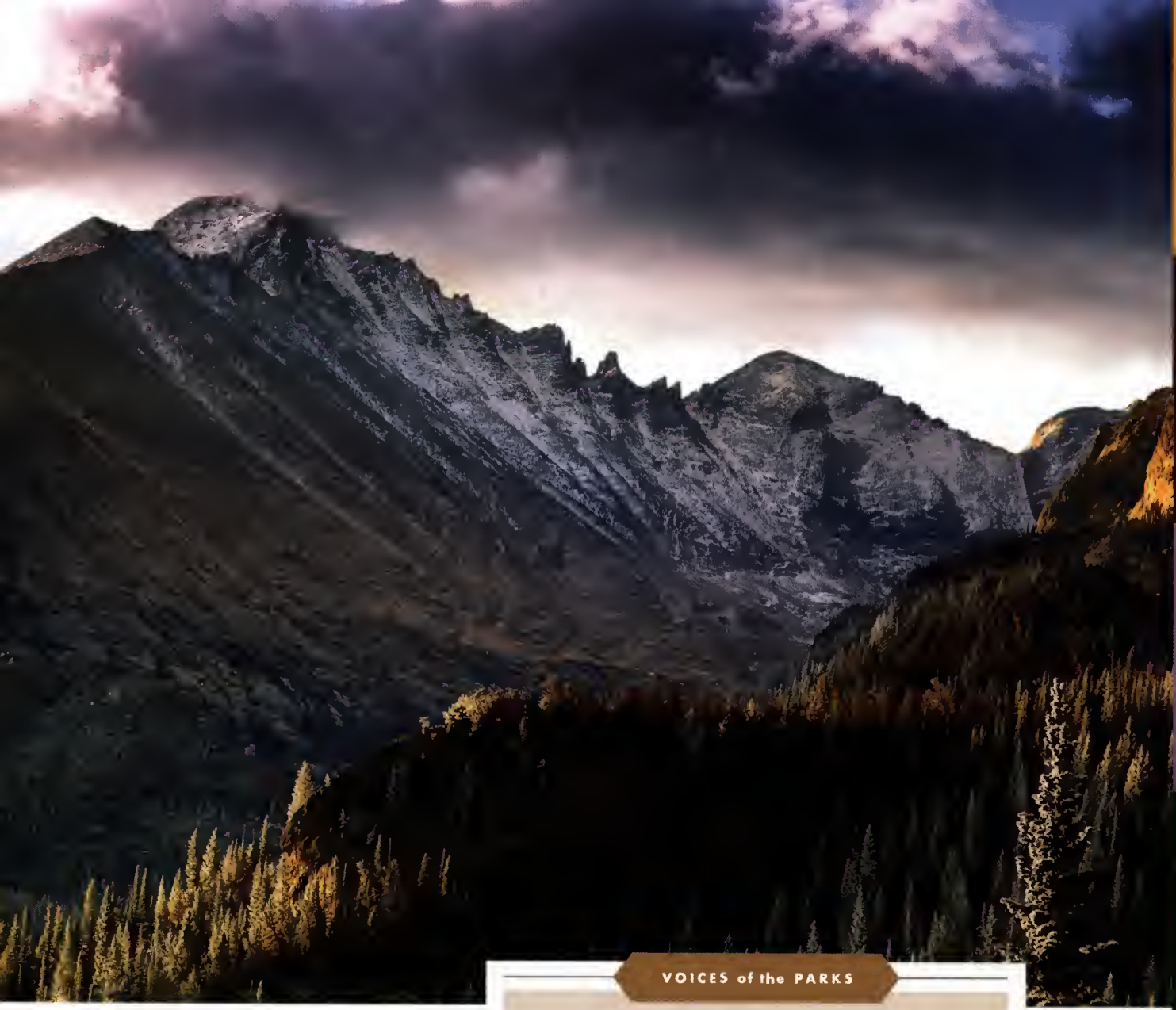
PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO The park is open year-round, but Trail Ridge Rood is usually closed fram mid-October ta Memariol Day. If yau ga between June and August (when trails are snow-free and wildflawers obound), be prepored ta deal with traffic. September brings dozzling clusters af aspens ond fewer people.

WHERE TO STAY Mauntoin vistos ond grozing elk moke **Maraine Park Campgraund** the pork's most scenic—and populor—crash pad, so reserve eorly. The hondsome spa suites ot **Boulder Braak on Fall River** in Estes Pork (the pork's histaric goteway tawn) have fireplaces and hot tubs averlooking the river. *Moroine: $20; nps.gov/romo. Boulder: From $99; baulderbrook.com.*

FIRST-TIME ESSENTIALS Stort early to drive the 48-mile Trail Ridge Raad. Far lunch, claim o porch toble at **Grand Lake Ladge**, where linganberry mint chutney accomponies the Coloroda lamb burger *($14)* ond all meols come with mountain views. Wark it off an the 2.8-mile (ane woy) trail from the Glacier Gorge trailheod to **Mills Lake**, where jogged peoks, including Langs, rise obove azure woter. It goins just 700 verticol feet, moking it kid-friendly. *Grond Lake: grondlokelodge. cam. Mills Loke: nps.gov/romo.*

RYAN WHITE/TANDEM STOCK



SEEN IT ALL BEFORE? Bypass the park's east side by entering from the north: From the Emmaline Lake trailhead just past the Tom Bennett Campground, hike 6.7 miles south (via the Mummy Pass Trail) to **Mummy Pass**, a high-alpine perch offering solitude and spectacular park views. *www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/arp.*

BEAT THE CROWDS The park's western edge offers relative seclusion, views of the Never Summer range, and trails to alpine waterfalls. Try the 7.6-mile **Onahu Creek loop**, which winds through moose country to roaring cascades and mountain-fringed meadows. *nps.gov/rama.*

VOICES of the PARKS

Sandra Corso | ROCKY MOUNTAIN GUIDE FOR THE WILDLAND TREKKING COMPANY

CALL OF THE WILD

"One morning, we left base camp to climb Mt. Chiquita. We were crossing the pass to get to Old Fall River Road when we came upon hundreds—I couldn't even count—but a herd of probably 500 elk. They were bugling, they were singing, they were meowing, they were barking, and there were babies around. It was first light, otherwise quiet, and I was driving very, very slowly over the pass so we could just enjoy that experience. I had never seen anything like that: 500, 600 elk hanging out at first light at 12,000-plus feet. We didn't say a word for 15 minutes."

DIGITAL EXTRA Photographer Ian Shive spends up to 300 days a year capturing the national parks. Take a peek behind his lens at *sunset.com/photographer*.



Growing THE GOOD LIFE

For one Santa Barbara gardener, harvest season never ends. Here, secrets from her extraordinary, ever-changing edible garden

By KATHLEEN N. BRENZEL
Photographs by THOMAS J. STORY

HAND LETTERING ALICE CHO



Valerie Rice, author of the blog *eat-drink-garden.com*, plons meals based on whot's ripe in her garden.

Valerie Rice didn't grow up gardening. In fact, for all she knew as a child, carrots and broccoli sprouted from supermarket shelves. "I thought all food came from Ralphs," says Rice, whose family lived in a master-planned community in Newport Beach, California. Then, as a fifth grader, she visited her grandmother in Belgium. Digging potatoes and greens in her grandma's garden—and feasting on dishes like potato-leek soup and braised endive wrapped in ham—was a revelation. "That's when the seed was planted for my future garden," says Rice. "I wanted that life."

Back in California, Rice "cooked up a storm" throughout her childhood. In her postcollege apartment, she dabbled in container gardening. When she moved into her house outside Santa Barbara 11 years ago, Rice planted her first edible garden. At the beginning, it was far from the Eden she had imagined—she had picked a spot that was too shady, for one—but through trial and error, and by tapping farmers at local markets for gardening advice, she learned.

Today, the 14½- by 29-foot walled garden explodes with edibles all year. Unlike many vegetable gardens, Rice's yard is designed for looks as well as production. Bamboo trellises turn bean vines into architecture, and apple trees are espaliered near the back wall. In summer, the beds spill with sweet corn, red-speckled beans, lemon cucumbers, and Padrón peppers—"things I can't find in markets," she says. In fall, Romanesco broccoli, watermelon radishes, and greens take over.

"The garden takes the guesswork out of menu planning," says Rice, who feeds her family of four (she and her husband have two daughters, ages 8 and 10) almost entirely from the garden. It also serves as the starting point for frequent dinner parties. "I grab a notebook and head outside a couple of days ahead of time to see what will be ready to harvest." When guests arrive, "everyone wants to see what's growing," says Rice. "We tour the garden, glasses of wine in hand, nibbling as we go."

When friends began asking Rice to share her recipes several years ago, she launched a garden-food blog, *eat-drink-garden.com*. The blog, which now has a following well beyond her Santa Barbara community, "has pushed me to be a more creative cook and gardener," she says. But like her grandmother, Rice takes a simple, unfussy approach to cooking. Her motto? "Pick. Mix. Serve."



Near right: Wide paths allow the family—and the dogs—to meander. Below: Summer crops, from basil to sunflowers, fill three raised beds. Far right: A rainbow harvest.

"When my kids pick their dinner from the garden, they can't make bad choices. The biggest gain is my sanity."

—VALERIE RICE—





Grow

TRICKS TO RAISING EDIBLES

EASY RAISED BEDS
Rice built her 4- by 8-foot roised beds from nursery kits ond lined them with wire mesh to deter gophers. They occommodote on ever-chonging cost of edibles, plonted in rows—lowest crops in front ond tollest in bock—so sunlight reoches them oll.

"GOURMET" SOIL
Rice mixes potting soil with sond, compost, ond on orgonic omendment contoining bot guono ond worm costings (G&B Orgonics; *kellogg gorden.com*). After plonting, she dusts soil with cottonseed meol or kelp meol. "I olwoys wont to rush the plonting stoge, but hord prep work poys off."

EXTRA BEDS
Downhill from the moin gorden, Rice creoted o "veggie oosis" by turning tree boxes into roised beds. You con buy the wooden boxes ot mony nurseries, even though they're not olwoys cleorly for sole.

DIY TRELLISES
To support fovo beons, Rice ties together bomboo stokes with twine. For stoking bush tomotoes, she mokes tipis of fruit tree prunings. Vining crops stoy tidy in tomoto coges; Rice turns the coges upside down ond gothers ends in o finiol.





Harvest

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR BOUNTY

STICK TO A SCHEDULE
Rice tockles pruning and weeding on Tuesdoys ond harvesting on Fridoys to replenish the foad supply for the weekend. She frequently replants bore spots with new craps. "Keeping at it keeps it eosy," she says.

EXTEND THE SEASON
Rice preserves anything she daesn't use immediotely. She dries opple, chile, squash, and peach slices in o nine-troy dehydrotor (*excalibur dehydrator.cam*). Fruits get puréed ond turned into fruit leothers; fresh tamataes, braccoli, ond green beans are put in reseoloble plastic bags ond frozen.

USE EVERYTHING
When harvesting, Rice never overlooks craps that oppeor o little averripe. "String beons ore so tender when I first horvest them," she soys. Left on the vine, they toughen up, "so I parbail them in solty water, then braise them with cherry tamataes ond sherry. I've opened up my caoking repertoire by using veggies in oll stoges." She alsa finds uses for every lost bit of her crops, tassing broccoli leoves ond flowers into solods, ond tucking tomotillo clippings inta bauquets. →

Serve

PADRÓN PEPPER SALAD

SERVES 4 AS AN APPETIZER, 2 AS A MAIN DISH / 20 MINUTES

Plant now to make this dish come summer. "It's like sunshine on a plate," says Rice. Padrón peppers are wonderfully tender when blitzed on a grill, and they're enjoyably unpredictable—most are mild, but every so often, you'll get a hot one.

24 Sun Gold cherry tomatoes, at room temperature
¾ tsp. flaked sea salt, divided
32 small Padrón peppers
10 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
½ cup Israeli feta, crumbled
1 tsp. purple basil flowers or tiny leaves from basil plant

1. Slice tomatoes in half. Put in a bowl and toss with ¼ tsp. salt. Set aside.
2. Heat a grill or a grill pan to medium-high. Toss peppers with 2 tsp. oil and grill until slightly charred all over, 3 to 4 minutes.
3. Divide peppers among 4 salad plates or 2 dinner plates, stacking to give some height to each dish. Divide tomatoes and sprinkle around peppers, then top with crumbled feta. To finish, drizzle 2 tsp. olive oil over each plate, sprinkle with a pinch of salt, and top with a few basil flowers.

PER APPETIZER SERVING 184 Cal., 75% (138 Cal.) from fat; 4.6 g protein; 16 g fat (4.5 g sat.); 8.6 g carbs (2.6 g fiber); 521 mg sodium; 17 mg chol. **GF/V**

Blipp this page to buy the linen apron Rice is wearing (opposite and on page 69), or go to valrice.com.



"The garden is the starting point for almost every meal, whether for 100 people or my family."

—VALERIE RICE—





For a spring supper on her patio, Rice starts with a salad of lightly dressed green and red lettuces.

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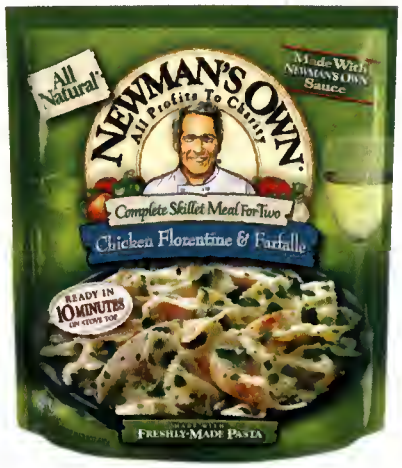


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Food & Drink



PEAK SEASON

SPRING BEAN

Nothing beats sweet, tender favas in sandwiches, soup, and risotto.

FOOD STYLING KAREN SHINTO

Photographs by IAIN BAGWELL

OPEN-FACE FAVA and EGG SALAD SANDWICHES

SERVES 4 / 45 MINUTES

Mashed favas and an exotic mix of spices give the familiar egg salad sandwich a makeover. North African–cookbook author Kitty Morse introduced us to the Tunisian spice blend called *tabil,* which is easy to make with ingredients that may already be in your pantry.

FAVA SALAD

- 1 1/4 cups dauble-shelled fava beans (see "Haw ta Dauble-Shell Favas," right)
- 2 1/2 tbsp. extra-virgin alive oil
- 1 1/2 tsp. leman juice
- 1/2 tsp. kasher salt

EGG SALAD

- 5 hard-caaked large eggs
- 1 garlic clave
- 2 tsp. cariander seeds
- 1/2 tsp. graund New Mexica ar Califarnia chile*
- 1/4 tsp. caraway seeds
- 1/2 tsp. kasher salt
- 2/3 cup mayannaise
- 8 slices challah bread (preferably with sesame seeds), lightly taasted
- 2 tbsp. chapped cilantra, plus whale leaves

1. Make fava salad: In a bowl, coarsely mash fava beans with a pastry blender. Stir in oil, lemon juice, and salt. Set aside.
2. Make egg salad: Peel and slice eggs; set aside. Using a mortar and pestle, coarsely grind garlic, coriander seeds, chile, caraway seeds, and salt to make tabil. Stir in mayonnaise, mashing mixture a bit.
3. Generously smear one side of toasts with tabil mayonnaise. Arrange a layer of eggs on top, then spoon fava salad over eggs. Scatter chopped cilantro over sandwiches and garnish with cilantro leaves. Serve sandwiches open-face and eat with a knife and fork.

**Find in the spice aisle at well-stocked supermarkets, Latino markets, and americanspice.com.*

PER SERVING 750 Cal., 42% (316 Cal.) from fat; 33 g pratein; 36 g fat (6.7 g sat.); 87 g carbo (2.5 g fiber); 1,194 mg sodium; 317 mg chol. V



How to double-shell favas

MAKES 2 CUPS
30 MINUTES

Tear open 3 lbs. **fava pods***. Add beans from pods to a pot of boiling salted water and return to a boil. Cook just until beans are tender beneath skin (slit to check), 2 minutes. Drain; rinse with cold water. Peel leathery skin by tearing beans open at rounded ends and popping out beans.

**Find at well-stocked grocery stores and farmers' markets.*

MAKE AHEAD
All but the final peeling, up to 1 day, chilled.



DIGITAL EXTRA
See how to make the perfect hard-cooked egg, step by step: *sunset.com/perfectegg*

Recipes by ELAINE JOHNSON



PEAK SEASON

LEEK, LETTUCE, and FAVA SOUP

SERVES 4 TO 6 (MAKES 7 CUPS) / 1 HOUR

To keep the color in this mild spring soup bright, use a deep green head of lettuce, cooking it only enough to wilt it, and peel favas shortly before using them.

- 1 large head romaine lettuce (about 1 lb.)
- 3 cups thinly sliced leeks (white and light green parts only), rinsed well
- 1 large celery stalk, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh dill, plus 3 tbsp. small dill leaves
- Zest of 1 lemon
- About 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- About 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 1 qt. reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups double-shelled fava beans (see "How to Double-Shell Favas," opposite page), divided
- About 1/2 cup crème fraîche

1. Cut ribs from lettuce and finely chop ribs and leaves separately. Set leaves aside.
2. In a large pot, cook lettuce ribs, leeks, celery, chopped dill, lemon zest, 1/2 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper with butter over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until very tender, about 15 minutes.
3. Stir in broth, cover, and bring to a boil over high heat. Add lettuce leaves, reduce heat, and simmer just until lettuce is tender, 1 minute. Set aside 1 cup of mixture.
4. Whirl soup in batches in a blender until very smooth, pouring into a bowl as blended. Return soup to pot and stir in reserved unblended soup and 1 1/2 cups fava beans. Heat, stirring, over medium heat until steaming.
5. Ladle soup into bowls. Dollop a generous spoonful of crème fraîche into each. Garnish with remaining fava beans and dill leaves and sprinkle with pepper. Add more salt and crème fraîche if you like.

PER SERVING 368 Col., 35% (128 Col.) from fat; 23 g protein; 14 g fat (7.8 g sat.), 49 g carbo (2.6 g fiber); 319 mg sodium; 44 mg chol. **GF/LS**

FAVA BEAN and GREENS RISOTTO

SERVES 4 (MAKES 7 CUPS) / 50 MINUTES

There's just enough creamy rice to hold together the generous tumble of favas and their greens, which taste similar to spinach.

- 4 oz. diced pancetta
- 1 qt. reduced-sodium chicken broth
- About 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 4 green onions, sliced
- 1/2 cup finely chopped fennel bulb
- 1 cup Arborio or sushi rice
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- About 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 qts. lightly packed fava greens* (leaves and tender sprigs) or leaves from mature (not baby) spinach
- 1 1/2 cups double-shelled fava beans (see "How to Double-Shell Favas," page 78)
- About 1/2 cup grated pecorino or parmesan cheese

1. Brown pancetta in a large pot over medium-high heat, stirring often, about 8 minutes. Transfer to paper towels with a slotted spoon, leaving fat in pot.
2. Meanwhile, bring broth and 1 cup water to a simmer in a small saucepan, or microwave in a glass measuring cup until hot.
3. Reduce heat under large pot to medium. Add enough oil to fat to make 3 tbsp. Stir in green onions, fennel, rice, salt, and 1/2 tsp. pepper; cook, stirring, until rice is opaque, about 3 minutes. Stir in broth, 1/2 cup at a time, and cook, stirring constantly until almost all the broth is absorbed before adding more, until rice is tender to the bite, about 20 minutes; the texture should be fairly soupy. Remove from heat.
4. Melt butter in a large frying pan over medium-high heat until just starting to brown. Add fava greens and cook, turning occasionally with tongs, until bright green, wilted, and tender, 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Fold fava greens and beans, 1/2 cup cheese, and the pancetta into risotto. Stir in about 1/4 cup more hot water to loosen the texture. Spoon into bowls, grind more pepper on top, and serve with more cheese if you like.

**Find at farmers' markets.*

PER SERVING 716 Cal., 37% (264 Cal.) from fat; 42 g protein; 30 g fat (10 g sat.); 86 g carbo (4.1 g fiber); 1,113 mg sodium; 75 mg chol. GF





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SPICE IT UP

A chef's easy-to-adapt curry recipes unlock a world of Indian cooking.

By Sara Dickerman

NO ONE DOES Indian food like Meeru Dhalwala. At the celebrated Vancouver, B.C., restaurants Vij's and Rangoli—which she co-owns with chef Vikram Vij—and at her new place, Shanik, in Seattle, Dhalwala is known for transforming Northwest ingredients with inventive spice combinations. "I never felt I had to follow the rules of Indian cooking," says Dhalwala, who was born in India but grew up in the United States. "That's my source of creativity."

For Dhalwala, being able to make a good curry is a key to healthy, improvisational cooking. "You can make anything—especially vegetables and legumes—taste delicious with just a few Indian spices," she says. At her Vancouver home, she explained the layers of flavor that go into a curry, and then spun it two ways. Dhalwala takes a freewheeling approach in the kitchen—and encourages home cooks to do the same. "I'm always smiling and yakking while I cook."

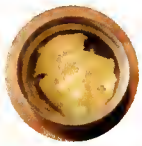


TAMARIND CHICKPEA CURRY with WINTER GREENS CURRY

Once you understand the basics, curry is easily adaptable, says Meeru Dhalwala.

Building blocks of curry

The term "curry" covers a range of stewy dishes based on masalas (spice mixes). But they usually share certain components—added in this order.



1. COOKING FAT
A fat, such as ghee (clarified butter; above), keeps food from sticking and amplifies flavor.



2. WHOLE SPICES
Sizzled in the fat, seeds, including cumin (above), infuse curry with mild flavor and add texture.



3. AROMATICS
Garlic, chiles, and ginger (above), plus onions or tomatoes, add fragrance, texture, and flavor.



4. POWDERED SPICES
These burn easily, so they go in next, buffered by the moist seasonings; turmeric (above) is often key.



5. SWEETENER
If sugar is involved, it should be stirred in just before the main ingredient so that it won't burn.



6. MAIN INGREDIENT
Meat, seafood, or vegetables are added at the end, and stirred to coat in the moist masala.

Photographs by THOMAS J. STORY

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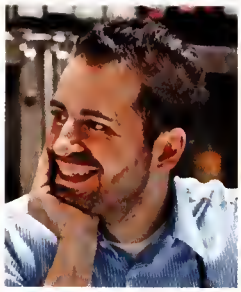
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WINTER GREENS CURRY

SERVES 4 TO 6 / 1 HOUR

Indian dishes are often created in counterpoint to one another. Dhalwala adds a bit of brown sugar to this curry since she developed it to accompany a tart chickpea curry (opposite page). "I believe in the ultimate pleasure of a dish that is sweet, sour, salty, and bitter," she says.

- ¼ cup ghee* or butter
- 1 lb. each stemmed mustard greens and kale (from about 3 lbs. whole bunches)
- 1½ tbsp. cumin seeds
- 2 tbsp. minced garlic
- 1½ to 2 tbsp. minced jalapeña chile
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh ginger
- 1 tbsp. turmeric
- 1 to 1½ tsp. salt
- ½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar

1. In a large, heavy pot or wok with a lid, melt ghee over medium heat. Meanwhile, chop greens roughly and rinse. **"You can use just one or a combination of greens. And ghee gives the greens richness, but you can use any cooking oil instead."**
2. Sprinkle in cumin seeds, swirl pot to spread, and let sizzle 30 seconds.
3. Stir in garlic and sizzle until pale golden, 10 to 20 seconds. Stir in chile and ginger; cook 30 seconds. **"I brown the garlic for a toasty flavor, then add the moist ginger and chile to stop the toasting before it gets too dark."** Add turmeric and salt and cook 1 minute. Stir in brown sugar.
4. Cook until sugar dissolves, about 30 seconds. Add half of greens, increase heat to medium-high, and let wilt until reduced enough to add other half. Using tongs, stir greens well to coat with spice mixture.
5. Cook, uncovered, stirring until greens are almost tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Cover and cook 1 minute more. Remove from heat and let sit, covered, 15 minutes. Serve with Tamarind Chickpea Curry (opposite page) and steamed basmati rice if you like.

**Find ghee (clarified butter) at Indian markets. Or, for Dhalwala's recipe, see sunset.com/ghee.*

VARIATIONS *Instead of greens, try an equal amount of sliced brussels sprouts, thinly sliced broccoli stems, or cooked potatoes.*

PER SERVING 274 Cal., 39% (108 Cal.) from fat; 6 g protein; 12 g fat (6.4 g sat.); 30 g carbo (1.9 g fiber); 543 mg sodium; 28 mg chol. GF/V



TIP

"Leave the greens a little damp to help create the cooking liquid."



TIP

"A lidded tiffin keeps your most-used spices handy and fresh."

DIGITAL EXTRA 14 easy Indian-inspired recipes: *sunset.com/freshindian.*





TIP

"For deep flavor, let the edges of the onions get dark brown."

TAMARIND CHICKPEA CURRY

SERVES 4 TO 6 / 30 MINUTES

This curry gets its lively pucker from tamarind paste. If you want another layer of complexity in your meal, consider topping both curries with Greek yogurt, cubed *paneer* (Indian cheese), chopped cooked bacon or sausage, or a sunny-side-up egg.

- ⅓ cup canola or grapeseed oil
- 3½ cups finely chopped onions (about 2½ medium)
- 1½ tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 tbsp. garam masala*
- ¼ tsp. cayenne
- ¾ tsp. pepper (medium grind)
- About 1½ tsp. salt
- 4½ tbsp. tamarind paste*
- 3 cans (15 oz. each) chickpeas (garbanzos), drained and rinsed, or 4⅛ cups cooked chickpeas
- Winter Greens Curry (opposite page)

1. In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, combine oil and onions over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are thoroughly browned, 15 to 20 minutes (the darker you can get them, the better, but don't let them burn).
2. Reduce heat to medium and stir in cumin, garam masala, cayenne, pepper, salt, and tamarind paste. Cook, stirring constantly, until onions are thoroughly coated, about 2 minutes. Add chickpeas and stir to coat thoroughly. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until heated through, about 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt.
3. Mix greens well and divide among wide, shallow bowls. Spoon about 1 cup chickpeas over greens.

**Garam masala, a northern Indian spice blend, is available at well-stocked grocery stores and Indian markets, as is tamarind paste (check the label to be sure that it has no added sugar). The paste should have the consistency of loose applesauce; if it's runnier, add another tablespoon of it to the dish.*

VARIATIONS *Instead of chickpeas, switch in an equal amount of eggplant, chicken, or tofu.*

PER SERVING WITHOUT WINTER GREENS 379 Cal., 44% (167 Cal.) from fat; 10 g protein; 21 g fat (1.3 g sat.); 43 g carbs (9.1 g fiber); 627 mg sodium; 7 mg chol. GF/LC/VG

THE CHEF IN ACTION



DIGITAL EXTRA Watch Meeru Dhalwala's curry techniques. Blipp this page or go to sunset.com/curry.

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QUICK CHICKEN MOLE

SERVES 4 TO 6 / 30 MINUTES

A traditional Mexican *mole* sauce takes hours, but we tinkered with it and came up with a version that achieves similarly deep flavors in a fraction of the time.

- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 medium garlic clove, chopped
- 1 tsp. New Mexico chile powder* (optional)
- ½ tsp. *each* pepper, kosher salt, cayenne, and cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. anise seeds
- 1 tbsp. toasted sesame seeds
- ¼ cup toasted sliced almonds
- ½ cup *each* tomato purée and reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 3 tbsp. semisweet chocolate chips
- 2 lbs. boned, skinned chicken thighs
- ½ to 1 serrano chile, minced
- ½ cup cilantro leaves
- Lime wedges

1. Heat a grill to high (450° to 550°). Meanwhile, heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and cook until softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in spices, sesame seeds, and almonds and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in tomato purée, broth, and chocolate chips.
2. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring often, until flavors develop and sauce thickens and darkens slightly, about 10 minutes. Purée in a blender with ½ cup water until smooth, about 30 seconds.
3. Pour 1 cup mole sauce over chicken in a medium bowl and toss to coat.
4. Grill chicken, turning once, until browned, about 8 minutes. Set chicken on a serving plate and sprinkle with minced chile and cilantro leaves. Serve with remaining mole sauce and lime wedges.

**Fruity, mild New Mexico chile powder is available at well-stocked grocery stores and Latino markets, but if you can't find it, you can leave it out and still have a flavorful dish.*

PER SERVING 226 Col., 44% (99 Col.) from fat; 24 g protein; 11 g fat (2.5 g sat.); 8.1 g carbo (1.8 g fiber); 318 mg sodium; 92 mg chol. GF/LC/LS

FOOD STYLING RANDY MON



TOFU and RICE NOODLES with BLACK BEAN SAUCE

SERVES 4 / 30 MINUTES

Pan-searing sliced tofu gives it a meatiness that's deliciously offset by crunchy vegetables and a drizzle of black bean sauce (pour on a little less if you're salt-sensitive). The Asian ingredients can be found in any large grocery store.

16 oz. pod Thoi rice-stick noodles
14 to 21 oz. firm tofu, droined
3 tbsp. vegetoble oil
20 smoll, thin corrots, peeled
1/3 cup block beon gorlic souce
1/4 cup Shooxing rice wine
3 tbsp. eoch soy souce ond toosted sesome oil
1 tbsp. chili gorlic souce
1 1/2 tsp. sugor
1 tbsp. eoch toosted sesome seeds ond minced fresh ginger
2 green onions, chopped
4 oz. sugor snop peos, thinly sliced crosswise

1. Boil noodles according to package directions, about 6 minutes. Drain.
2. Meanwhile, set tofu with a long side facing you. Cut tofu into eight 1/2-in.-thick slices, then lay between sheets of paper towels; gently press out excess moisture.
3. Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add tofu and fry until browned, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate. Add carrots and cook, stirring occasionally, until carrots begin to brown, about 5 minutes. Transfer to plate of tofu. Halve tofu diagonally.
4. Meanwhile, stir black bean garlic sauce, rice wine, soy sauce, sesame oil, chili garlic sauce, sugar, sesame seeds, ginger, green onions, and 1/4 cup water together in a medium bowl.
5. Add black bean mixture to frying pan and boil over medium heat until sauce is reduced to 1 cup, about 3 minutes.
6. Divide noodles among 4 wide bowls. (If noodles are stuck together, rinse with hot water and drain.) Spoon 3 tbsp. sauce over each bowl. Arrange 4 pieces tofu, 5 carrots, and 1/4 cup snap peas over each, and spoon on remaining sauce if you like.

PER SERVING WITH 3 TBSP. SAUCE 828 Cal., 31% (256 Cal.) from fat; 19 g protein; 29 g fat (3.6 g sat.); 118 g carbo (7.6 g fiber); 890 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. VG

SCALLOPS with ORANGE, AVOCADO, and JICAMA

SERVES 4 / 30 MINUTES

Elegant and fast-cooking, scallops make a smart choice when you're expecting company on a weeknight.

8 smoll Yukon Gold pototoes, thinly sliced
3 tbsp. butter
Solt and pepper
1 oronge, such as Coro Coro*, blood, or novel
1/2 cup finely diced jicomo
1 smoll shollot, finely chopped
2 rodishes, holved ond thinly sliced
1/2 firm-ripe ovocodo, diced
1 tbsp. eoch chopped fresh dill ond lemon juice
Solt and pepper
12 dry-pocked seo scollops (obout 1 lb.)
2 tbsp. olive oil
4 dill sprigs

1. In a large nonstick frying pan, spread potatoes evenly. Add butter and 3/4 cup water. Cook over medium-high heat, partially covered, until water evaporates and potatoes are soft, 8 to 10 minutes. Uncover, reduce heat to medium, and cook, stirring occasionally, until potatoes just begin to turn golden on the edge, about 5 minutes. Season lightly with salt and pepper and keep warm over low heat.
2. Meanwhile, with a small, sharp knife, cut ends off orange and set on a cut side. Following the fruit's curve, slice off peel and white pith. Cut orange between inner membranes to release segments; discard membranes. Finely dice segments and put in a medium bowl. Stir in jicama, shallot, radishes, avocado, dill, and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
3. Heat a large, heavy frying pan (not nonstick) over high heat. Season scallops with salt and pepper. Swirl in oil and heat until just beginning to smoke. Sear scallops until browned, about 1 minute. Turn and sear until just cooked through, about 30 seconds more.
4. Divide potatoes among 4 wide, shallow bowls. Arrange 3 scallops in each bowl and spoon on some jicama and orange mixture. Top bowls with bits of dill.

** Any orange works in this dish, but the Cara Cara holds its shape especially well when diced.*

PER SERVING 434 Cal., 39% (170 Cal.) from fat; 24 g protein; 19 g fat (6.8 g sat.); 41 g carbo (4.3 g fiber); 257 mg sodium; 60 mg chol. GF/LC/LS

DIGITAL EXTRA Wotch o video on the best way to seor scallops. Blipp this page or go to sunset.com/scollops.



Recipes by AMY MACHNAK & JULIA LEE | *Photographs by* ANNABELLE BREAKEY

In the SUNSET KITCHEN

TIPS FROM OUR TEAM



COOKBOOK OF THE MONTH

Simple pleasures

Chez Panisse alum David Tanis is the rare chef who creates recipes that regular people can make. His latest cookbook, *One Good Dish: The Pleasures of a Simple Meal* (Artisan, 2013; $26), is filled with short recipes that distill decades of kitchen wisdom. Here's one of our favorites.

CHEESE IN A JAR Slice ½ lb. **fresh goat cheese** or mild feta into 2-in. chunks. Layer the cheese in a clean glass jar, adding a few **thyme sprigs**, **rosemary sprigs**, a **bay leaf**, a couple of halved **garlic cloves**, and a few **black peppercorns** as you go. Pour in enough **olive oil** to cover the cheese. Seal tightly and chill several days before serving. This keeps, chilled, up to 1 month; eat with a crusty loaf.



HOW TO ...

MAKE A BAD BERRY GOOD

The next time you're saddled with hard, flavorless strawberries, try this: Slice or quarter them, and stir in a bowl with a little good-quality balsamic vinegar and sugar. After sitting just a half-hour, the berries transform into sweet, juicy morsels. We spoon them over ice cream or onto toasted pound cake—or use them in salad: Make a vinaigrette with the juices and dress greens, then arrange next to fresh goat cheese and a pile of the berries, sprinkled with black pepper.

ST. PADDY'S DAY

WESTERN HALF-AND-HALFS

Instead of the usual Guinness and Harp, mix and match these local brews.

The stouts

THE CZAR IMPERIAL STOUT Avery Brewing Company, Boulder

OBSIDIAN STOUT Deschutes Brewery, Bend, OR

OLD RASPUTIN RUSSIAN IMPERIAL STOUT North Coast Brewing Company, Fort Bragg, CA

The lagers & pale ales

CALIFORNIA LAGER Anchor Brewing, San Francisco

LONGBOARD ISLAND LAGER Kona Brewing Co., Kailua-Kona, HI

STEELHEAD EXTRA PALE ALE Mad River Brewing Co., Blue Lake, CA





TOP TOOL

Cut-anything scissors

Ever since food stylist Karen Shinto told us about Joyce Chen's Unlimited Scissors, we've been using them on everything from sprigs of herbs to sturdy chickens. They're comfortable for a woman's smaller hand, with short blades that get into tight spots larger scissors can't. *$29; amazon.com.*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP ANNABELLE BREAKEY (2, FOOD STYLING RANDY MON, KAREN SHINTO), JEFFERY CROSS

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Mediterranean Pan-Roasted Salmon

Prep: 10 min | Makes 4 servings
Cook: 12 min

1 tsp. **McCormick Gourmet™ Basil Leaves**
1 tsp. **McCormick Gourmet Garlic Powder**
1/2 tsp. **McCormick Gourmet Mediterranean Oregano Leaves**
1/2 tsp. **McCormick Gourmet Crushed Rosemary**
1/2 tsp. **McCormick Gourmet Sicilian Sea Salt**
4 salmon fillets, skin on (4 oz. each)
1 tbsp. plus 2 tsp. olive oil, divided
2 tbsp. sugar
1 medium fennel bulb, cored and thinly sliced
1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes
Lemon wedges

MIX seasonings in medium bowl. Sprinkle 2 tsp. over salmon. Reserve remaining seasoning mixture in bowl. Set aside.

HEAT 1 tbsp. of the oil in large skillet on medium-high heat. Place salmon, skin-side up, in skillet. Cook 5 minutes.

MEANWHILE, add sugar and remaining 2 tsp. oil to reserved seasoning mixture; mix well. Add fennel and tomatoes; toss to coat. Turn salmon fillets. Place fennel mixture around salmon in skillet. Cook 6 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Serve with lemon wedges.

To prepare in a cast-iron skillet: Cook salmon, skin-side up, in 12-inch cast iron skillet on medium heat 3 minutes. Continue as directed. (Not recommended if cooking on a glass top range.)

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For inspiring menu ideas and recipes to entice your senses, visit mccormickgourmet.com

In the SUNSET KITCHEN



from
ANDREA KIM
Los Angeles

WINNING READER RECIPE

BEET SALAD WITH PEA SHOOTS

After scooping up pea shoots at the farmers' market, Kim started mentally composing a recipe as she shopped for other ingredients. We love this unusual combo of creamy avocado with crunchy shoots, earthy-sweet beets, and tangy lemon. **SERVES 4 TO 6 / 1½ HOURS**

- 5 medium red beets, unpeeled
- 1½ tsp. kosher solt, divided
- ½ lb. peo shoots, tough stems trimmed ond shoots snipped into bite-size pieces
- ½ shollot, minced
- ½ bunch fresh chives, chopped (obout 3 tbsp.)
- ¼ cup extro-virgin olive oil
- 2 to 3 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1½ firm-ripe ovocodos, diced
- ½ tsp. pepper

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Scrub beets and put in a baking pan large enough to arrange them in a single layer. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. salt. Cover with foil and roast until tender when pierced with the tip of a small, sharp knife, about 1 hour.
2. Cool beets until cool enough to handle. Peel and cut into ½-in.-thick wedges.
3. Combine pea shoots, shallot, chives, oil, lemon juice, and remaining ½ tsp. salt in a large bowl. Top with beets, avocados, and pepper, tossing just to coat.

MAKE AHEAD *Roasted beets, up to 1 day (peel and slice just before making salad).*

PER SERVING 200 Cal., 70% (141 Cal.) fram fat; 3.1 g pratein; 16 g fat (2.3 g sat.); 14 g carba (6 g fiber); 437 mg sadium; 0 mg chal. GF/LC/VG

Send us your best original recipe! **If published, you earn $250. sunset.com/submitrecipe.**

ANNABELLE BREAKEY (FOOD STYLING, KAREN SHINTO)



100% amazing flavor.
47% less sodium*.
*Vs. the average broth brand

Roasted Chicken Noodle Soup

2 tsp. olive oil
2 cups sliced carrots
1 cup thinly sliced celery
1 cup chopped onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp. **McCormick Gourmet™ Mediterranean Oregano Leaves**
1/2 tsp. **McCormick Gourmet Thyme Leaves**
1 leaf **McCormick Gourmet Turkish Bay Leaves**
4 cups **Kitchen Basics® Chicken Stock**
1 cup uncooked egg noodles
2 cups shredded roasted chicken

HEAT oil in large saucepot on medium heat. Add carrots, celery, onion, garlic, oregano, thyme and bay leaf; cook and stir 5 minutes or until vegetables soften.

STIR in stock. Bring to boil. Stir in noodles. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes or until tender. Add chicken; simmer 5 to 10 minutes longer or until chicken is heated through. Season to taste, as desired. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Makes 6 servings.

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ed on the weighted average sodium level per serving for nat-sodium broth, bouillon and stock and regular-sodium beef, tomato and chicken flavors.

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SMALL IN NAME ONLY

Make no mistake: Petite Sirah is a powerhouse red. *By Sara Schneider*

DON'T BE FOOLED by the name. First, Petite Sirah is anything *but* little. It's a deep, dark bruiser of a wine—a stain-your-teeth-purple kind of wine. Second, it's not Syrah (spelled with a "y"—that's a different grape variety with a different personality), a big point of confusion for many wine drinkers.

At its irresistible best, Petite Sirah (or Pets as fans call it) offers up the intense dark berry and plum fruit you'd expect from its inky color, plus layers of haunting violet and warm spice aromas, black pepper, mocha, and earth. As John Concannon, whose father, James, bottled the first American Petite Sirah—vintage 1961—puts it: "Petite Sirah is the St. Bernard that wants to sit in your lap."

Released in 1880 in southern France, the variety was first called Durif (after botanist François Durif, who introduced it). Within a decade, the vines were imported to the Bay Area's Alameda County (home to today's Concannon vineyard), where they thrived in warm, dry California far better than in damper France. Recent DNA testing has uncovered the provenance of Durif: It's the genetic child of an old French variety called Peloursin—and Syrah. Though early winemakers didn't know about the Syrah side of the equation, they began referring to Durif as *Petite* Sirah, likely because they spotted similarities between parent and child in the vineyard, only this new variety had dense clusters of much smaller berries.

Pets' tiny berries, ironically, account for the heft of the wine. A greater ratio of skin and seeds to juice means more extracted color and flavor and bigger tannins, all of which call for winemaking finesse. "You've got to tame this beast," says John Concannon. Petite Sirah is no cocktail wine—it needs hearty food alongside. Pull out a deeply flavored dish with enough protein and fat to coat those tannins, and you'll taste what all the excitement is about. And you can pick up even more from the wine's best fans at P. S. I Love You *(psiloveyou.org)*.

SPICED SHORT RIBS with ROASTED BABY CARROTS and CIPOLLINI ONIONS

SERVES 4 OR 5 / 3¾ HOURS

A dark-fruited Petite Sirah is perfect with rich, warmly spiced short ribs. Serve over mashed potatoes seasoned with freshly grated or prepared horseradish.

- 4 lbs. beef short ribs, about 4 in. long*
- About ½ tbsp. *each* kosher salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1 cup *each* coarsely chopped onion, carrot, and celery
- 3 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tbsp. minced ginger
- 1 tsp. *each* ground cumin and ground coriander
- 3 tbsp. flour
- 1 bottle (750 ml.) Petite Sirah or other dry red wine
- About 2 cups reduced-sodium beef broth
- 1 tsp. black peppercorns
- 1 cinnamon stick (2 in. long)
- 1¼ lbs. multicolored or regular baby carrots, trimmed and scrubbed or peeled
- 1¼ lbs. cipollini onions, peeled

1. Preheat oven to 300°. Rinse and dry short ribs. Sprinkle all over with ½ tbsp. *each* salt and pepper. Add 1 tbsp. oil and the butter to a large, deep ovenproof pot over medium-high heat. Working in batches, brown short ribs all over, about 5 minutes per batch, transferring to a bowl as done.
2. Add chopped onion, carrot, celery, garlic, and ginger to pot and cook, stirring often, until vegetables are beginning to brown, 7 to 8 minutes. Add cumin and coriander and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Sprinkle with flour and cook, stirring often, until golden brown. Pour wine and 2 cups broth into pot and add peppercorns and cinnamon stick; stirring constantly, bring to a boil. Return short ribs and any accumulated juices to pot. Liquid should just cover them; add a little more broth if necessary. Cover and bake until meat is very tender when pierced, 2¼ to 2½ hours.
3. Meanwhile, spread baby carrots and cipollini onions in a 9- by 13-in. baking pan. Drizzle with remaining 1 tbsp. oil and mix to coat; cover with foil. Set in oven after ribs have baked about 1½ hours, and bake 45 minutes. Remove foil and roast until vegetables are tender when pierced and beginning to brown, about 15 minutes longer. If necessary, broil 4 to 6 in. from heat to brown a little more, about 5 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.
4. Lift ribs from cooking liquid, cover, and keep warm. Strain liquid into a wide pan, skim off fat, and boil until sauce is reduced to about 2 cups and coats the back of a spoon, about 15 minutes.
5. Arrange ribs in wide, shallow bowls. Spoon carrots and cipollini onions around them and drizzle with a little sauce. Serve remaining sauce on the side.

**Short ribs cut lengthwise are often called English-style. If they're too long, ask your butcher to cut them in half.*

PER SERVING 852 Cal., 48% (405 Cal.) from fat; 74 g protein; 45 g fat (18 g sat.); 35 g carbo (7 g fiber); 1,007 mg sodium; 220 mg chol.



Sara tweets! Follow wine editor Sara Schneider for tasting tips, wine picks, and news: @SaraAtSunset.
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ANNABELLE BREAKEY (FOOD STYLING: KAREN SHINTO)



SIP

Top-flight Petite Sirahs

Chacewater 2011
(Kelseyville Bench, Lake County; $20). Lush, ripe plum, berries, lavender, and pepper.

Foppiano 2010
(Russian River Valley; $25). Layered blackberry, plum, licarice, and spice.

Vina Robles 2010
(Pasa Rables; $26). Raunded tannins and rich dark fruit spiked with black pepper.

Gustafson 2010 East Ridge Vineyard
(Dry Creek Valley; $28) Co[illegible]der [illegible] berry, plum, chacalate, and earthy [illegible].

Ridge 2011 Lytton Estate
(Dry Creek Valley; $30). Lean and juicy, with dusty berries and cherries, mint, and Asian spices.

Ancient Peaks 2010
(Pasa Rables; $35). Intense black fruit softened by a whiff of violets.

Concannon 2010 "Captain Joe's" Reserve
([illegible] Valley; $36) [illegible] mulberry, star anise, pepper [illegible] with plush tannins.

Robert Biale 2011 "Royal Punishers"
(Napa Valley; $39). Dense, dusty olallieberry and Bing cherry with a touch of cocoa.

Grgich Hills 2009 Miljenko's Vineyard
(Napa Valley; $60). Layered and braading; violet araund dark plum and hints of licarice.

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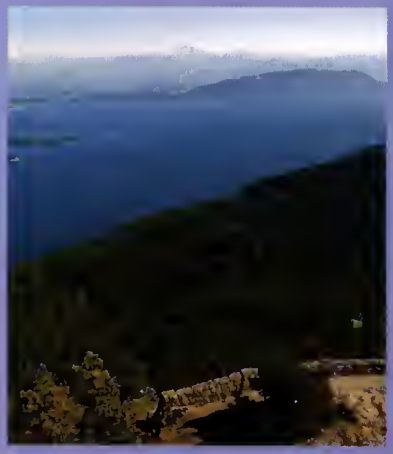
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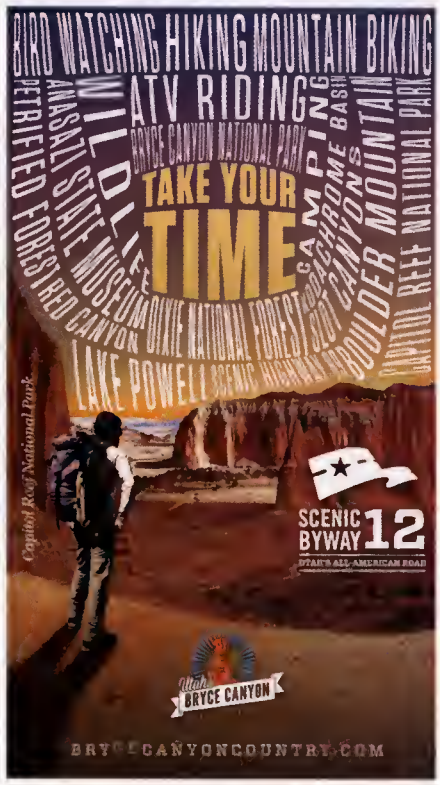
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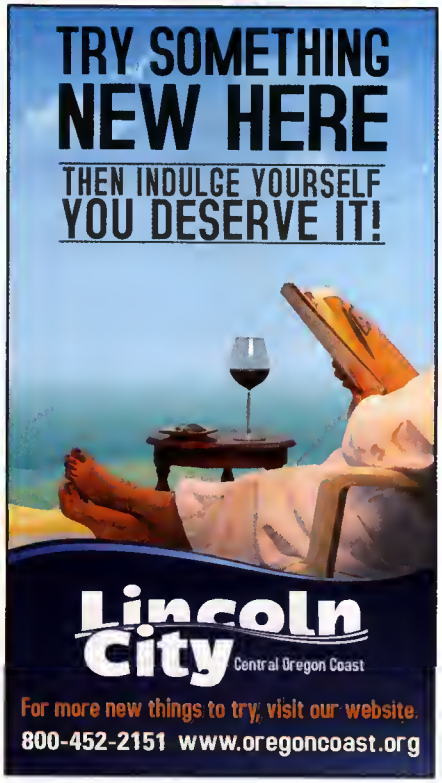
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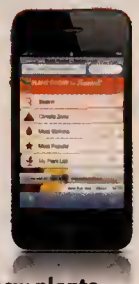
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ASK SUNSET

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT LIFE IN THE WEST? WE HAVE THE ANSWERS.



Q: My granddaughter, a junior at Colorado State, is turning 21 soon.

We wont to celebrote with o trip to Colifornio wine country, including introductory wine tosting, good meols, ond nice lodging (it needn't be luxurious). We'd love to see redwoods too.
—FRANCES CHAPMAN, FORT COLLINS, CO

DEAR FRANCES Here's a three- or four-day tour that will introduce your granddaughter to both Sonoma and Napa wine countries. For Sonoma, base yourself at Healdsburg's H2hotel *(h2hotel.com)* and drive west into the Russian River Valley. We love The Barlow *(the barlow.net)*, the Sebastopol marketplace where boutique wineries like La Follette and Marimar show off the region's way with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and Zazu Kitchen + Farm (above) does stellar things with local produce. Back in Healdsburg, head to Ridge Winery's Lytton Springs tasting room *(ridgewine.com)* to savor great Dry Creek Valley Zinfandels. Next, on to Napa Valley. Take idyllic State 128 through Alexander and Knights Valleys (for redwoods, stop at Bothe–Napa Valley State Park) to Franciscan Estate *(franciscan.com)*, where you can play vintner in a blending session, and to St. Supéry *(stsupery.com)* for savvy food and wine pairings. Cap your visit in Michelin star–laden Yountville: Book a room at Hotel Yountville *(hotelyountville.com)* and celebrate the big 21st at Thomas Keller's sublime yet unstuffy Ad Hoc *(adhocrestaurant.com)*.

Q: What's your take on collage photo frames?

I hove o bunch of fomily photos to hong, but since I live in o 1907 building with concrete wolls, I hove to hong them gollery-style from the picture molding. I think one combo frome with mony openings will look better thon o dozen smoll fromes. When I told o friend I wos considering o colloge frome, she wos horrified—she thinks they're tocky.
—G.G., SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR G.G. We don't hate collage photo frames. They can be real problem-solvers, and it's possible to use them stylishly. First, select photos that are black and white to fill them. (When many small photos crowd next to one another, color can look frenetic.) And the fact you have to hang the frame from molding is a style bonus—that added bit of something different (versus just hanging the frame on the wall) will really help. Instead of a basic nail or a hook, think about interesting hardware like a tiny knob or drawer pull from places like Anthropologie or Cost Plus World Market. Finally, choose something modern and cool to hang the frame on—twine, a small link chain, or a leather cord.



To create this look, we connected two ready-made collage frames and added a chain as a hanger.

Q: Two years ago we planted a Ceanothus gloriosus in our backyard.

At first it thrived, but now it's withered ond unhoppy. Whot's going on? We live in *Sunset* climote zone 17, obout 10 blocks from the oceon, ond hove foggy summers. —NANCY J., SAN FRANCISCO



DEAR NANCY Remember *When Harry Met Sally*, when Billy Crystal told Meg Ryan she thought she was low maintenance but was really high maintenance? Ceanothus is like that. The rangy, tough-seeming plant with the foamy blue blossoms—generally at their peak this month—looks like it could handle anything. But it's more finicky than you'd think. Clay soil makes it unhappy, as does too much water. Give it sandy, well-drained soil, and make sure you're not overusing the hose or drip-irrigation system (where you live, ceanothus wants no summer water at all)—and the fraught relationship between you and your ceanothus can resume a smooth course to happiness.

Email your questions about Western gardening, travel, food, wine, or home design to *asksunset@sunset.com*.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: TIA GAVIN PHOTO; JEFFERY CROSS; SAN MARCOS GROWERS

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